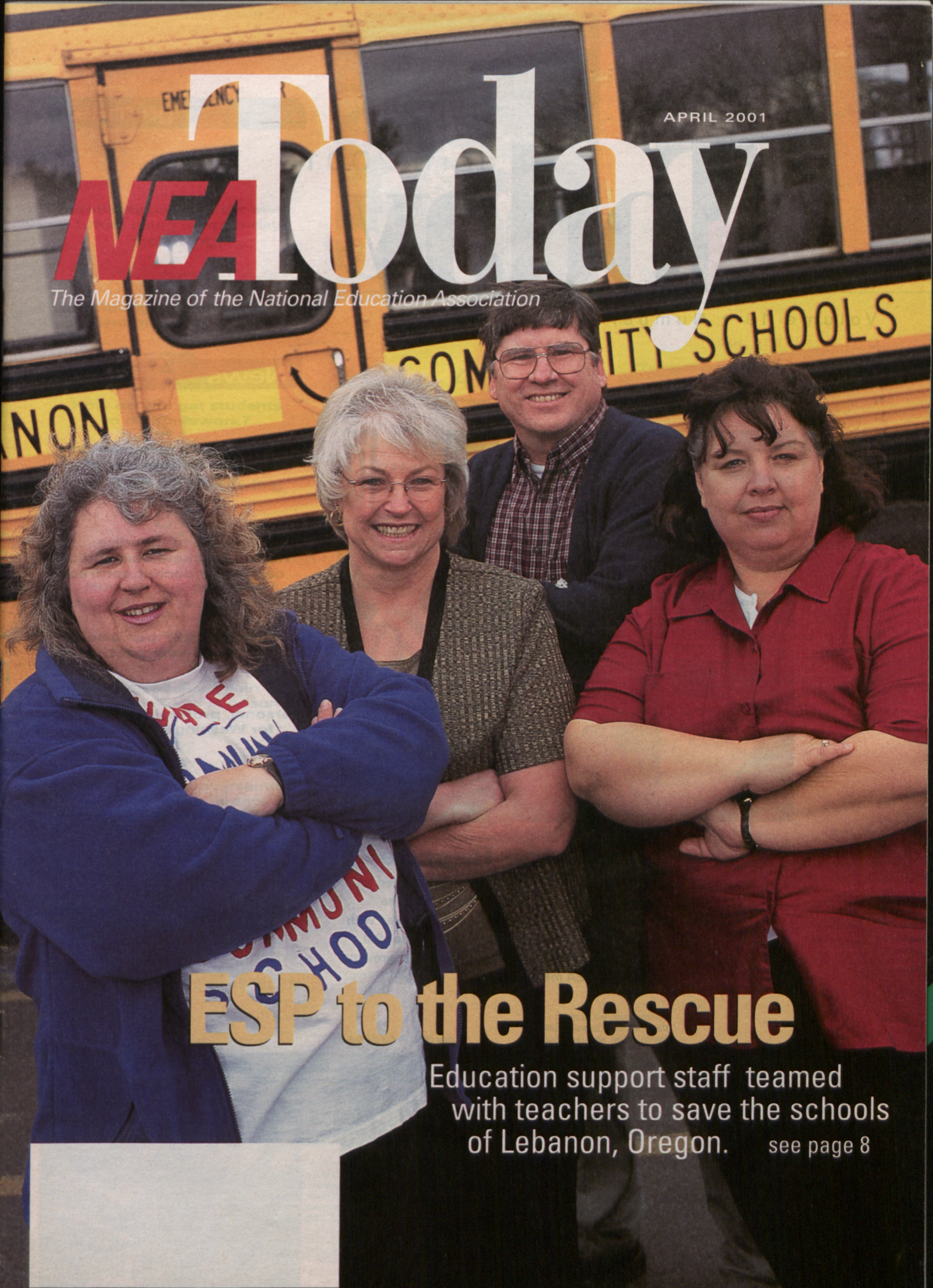
APRIL 2001

# NEA Today

The Magazine of the National Education Association



## ESP to the Rescue

Education support staff teamed with teachers to save the schools of Lebanon, Oregon. see page 8

NEA Today

april 2001

Volume 19 • Number 7

Carole Archer

## COVER STORY
page 8

# ESP to the Rescue

**When the schools of Lebanon, Oregon, started to crumble from neglect, support staff rallied the community—their community—and partnered with teachers to save their schools. A look at the vital contributions of ESP members—the fastest growing segment of NEA membership.**

**On the cover, left to right: Daylene Davis, Bonnie Phillips, Martin Jones, and Janis Eggert.**

Cover photo by Carole Archer

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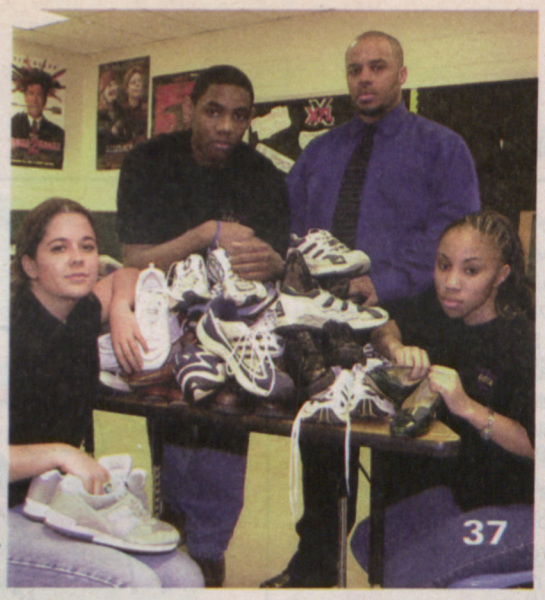

Sandy Schaeffer

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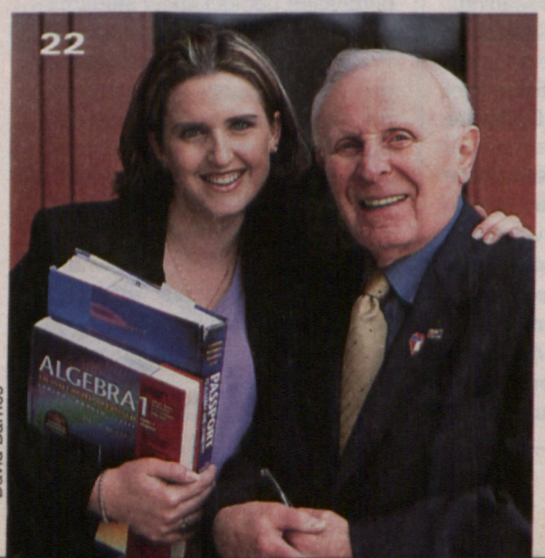

David Barnes


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### PRO BOSTON PUBLIC

I disagree with Robert Talmage over his outrage at the television show "Boston Public" (Letters, March). Television is an entertainment media. "Boston Public" is fiction. I've seen programs about doctors, lawyers, policemen, nurses, housewives, even flying nuns! I always took these programs for what they were, total escapist entertainment.

I've been teaching for 13 years, and although it's personally rewarding, I doubt that a realistic protrayal of what I do would be considered entertainment by anyone.

But, there is a lot going on in this show that I can relate to: Teachers working long hours, teachers who can not afford to buy a house, teachers going out of their way to help troubled students.

A lot of people have the mistaken notion that teachers are pompous individuals without a sense of humor. I would like to set the record straight. There is at least one teacher in Maryland who can take something on television for what it is, fictional entertainment.

Brenda Osborne
Glen Burnie, Maryland

"Boston Public," the realistic and entertaining TV series, tells it like it is. The episodes are as real as they appear in our public schools.

A concerned teacher does whatever it takes to motivate and keep students on task.

Teachers do date and sometimes marry their colleagues; students do fall in love with their teachers; they sometimes carry guns and knives into schools; police are called for assistance; parents do harrass teachers and administrators.

This show is letting people know what it is to be a public school teacher. It's also letting the public know that teachers come from every walk of life.

Mike Bonner
Altadena, California

### STUDENT WEIGHT

I take angry exception to your article "Student Weight: Heavy Burden" (Health, February). You say, "Children who are overweight or obese have more illnesses and tend to miss more days of school and then have to make up for lost class time." Says who? What basis does this statement have?

The next time you print an article about fat children, take a hard look at the whole picture. Look at educators who are prejudiced against fat children. Look at fat children who stay home from school, not because they're ill, but because of the vicious teasing.

Not all fat children have poor self-esteem. But all fat children fight daily for their self-esteem when they're exposed to prejudice.

Barbara Snyder
Havre de Grace, Maryland

You are right that obesity and our sedentary lifestyle are major problems.

I am a physical education teacher and I was on the National Council of Physical Education for Children. I work diligently to improve my teaching and the quality of physical education.

I also realize that, unfortunately, many physical education programs are still in the "throw out the ball" mode, or playing elimination games, or, worse yet, just doing fitness tests.

But here are some thoughts:

■ The American Alliance of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, with the proper resources, can probably do more to reduce obesity than any other group.

■ In the article, the words "physical education" aren't mentioned. How can this be? Quality physical education programs can make a difference! We can identify appropriate practices in physical education for children and adults.

Michael Soules
Jericho, Vermont

### BOY SCOUTS

The March Rights Watch article says the Boy Scouts may pay a high price for remaining open strictly to heterosexuals. While I regret any hardship this fine organization may endure, they're teaching a valuable lesson. Sometimes doing the right thing exacts a toll. Virtue isn't free or painless.

We at public schools do behavior-based discrimination every day. We expel students for drugs and violence. We expel them for things they choose to do. Shouldn't the Scouts be given the same prerogative?

I benefited from scouting as a boy. They are in my prayers.

Paul Milligan
Modesto, California

### READING IN CLASS

I agree with Paul Pineiro (Letters, February) that teachers must devise activities to entice students to read, but I do not believe that offering class time for silent reading is "burning time."

In my middle school reading program, we read from an anthology, discuss, and then complete projects based on the stories.

I read to my students daily. We do extension activities based on the readings, such as student-made tests and response journals.

Yes, I do regularly offer class time for students to read. By doing this, I model my belief in the value of reading, and provide a quiet atmosphere where everyone focuses on reading. Many students do not have this at home.

Janice Itzel
Wyoming, Delaware

Paul Pineiro seems to be more worried about a teacher "doing half the work" than about what the teacher is trying to accomplish.

It hurt to have a colleague suggest that we who use silent, sustained reading in our classrooms are doing so to do less work.

On the contrary, I use quiet reading time for the last 20 minutes of my 90-minute block, and it takes quite a bit of work to implement.

I teach non-honors juniors at Omaha North High School, an inner-city school of 2,300 students, many of whom do not read outside of class.

I decided that if I accomplished no other goal this year, I would try to rekindle their love of literature. I believe I have succeeded in many cases.

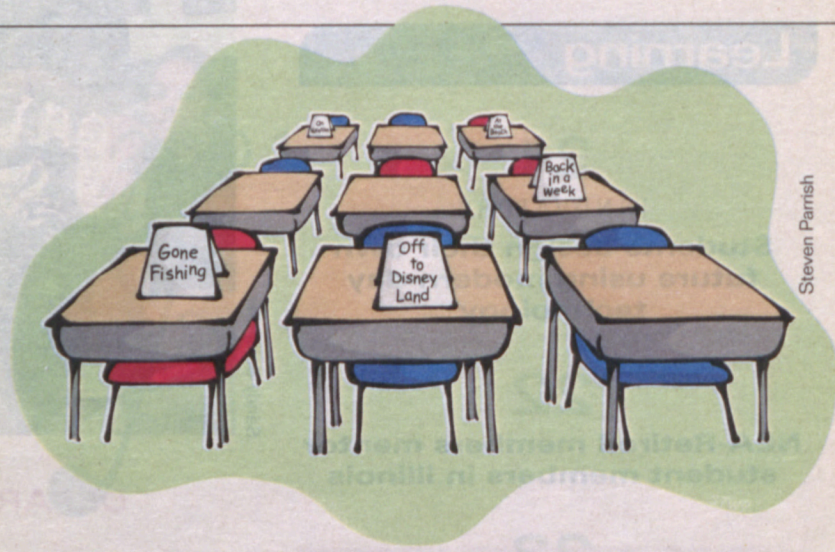
I spent a lot of time creating the framework for our reading time. I purchased books I knew students would enjoy.

Each student has a participation grade for each day and must produce a quarterly project related to one of their books.

I was skeptical myself at first, but now, I can't imagine eliminating silent reading.

My greatest reward was when two "reluctant readers" argued over who would read a book first. I solved it by buying an extra copy.

Jann Dappen
Omaha, Nebraska




Steven Parrish

### MISSING SCHOOL FOR FAMILY VACATIONS

I found Phyllis Lewis's article "The Orlando Odyssey" (My Turn, February) very timely. Recently, I've encountered a great outflux of children from my own classroom for various reasons. Some were for illnesses, but others for the growing mid-year family vacation.

I believe the pressure on the family places a great priority on quality family time. But for many of these trips, the educational timing is all wrong. Plans are made with no regard to the school calendar. If parents took the time, they would see many opportunities for extended getaways. I had three families go away between the Martin Luther King holiday and the Presidents Day four-day weekend without taking advantage of any of the extended holiday time.

It was courageous of Ms. Lewis to attempt to put such a positive spin on extended absences. Maybe she has the right perception. But I see much greater, far-reaching effects.

If our classroom is truly a community of learners, there can be no substitute for community members and the contributions they make. In a heterogeneous group of children, the prolonged absence of certain children slows the progress of the whole. Similarly, the prolonged absence of the more needy student simply adds to the remediation needed. The make-up work and the classroom presentations about the trip that Ms. Lewis suggests are attempts at a solution and should be applauded, but they do not substitute for the dynamic interrelationships that occur in a classroom.

In this age of high teacher accountability and a public agenda of standards and test results, I believe there needs to be a recommitment by communities to the importance of regular school attendance. It is unreasonable to maintain high expectations of teachers without some sense of accountability for parents.

Michael DeLeo
Media, Pennsylvania

### REACHING OLDER READERS

How refreshing to read Greg Kurek's strategies for helping older students improve reading (cover story, February).

As an elementary reading teacher, I see these strategies used daily.

The article reminded me of the time my youngest daughter was struggling with her ninth-grade history homework. I determined the readability level of her textbook and was stunned to discover that the beginning chapters were written at the undergraduate college level. Later chapters were at the graduate level.

When we purchase textbooks, we must keep in mind struggling readers. District reading specialists should be consulted when purchasing a new series. While a content-area textbook may contain all the required curriculum-driven information, it is useless if the student must struggle to read it.

Kathy Modar
Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania

### MATH DEGREES

The February Bottom Line indicates that only 41 percent of math teachers hold math degrees.

I hold a degree in education, with math and science majors. I suspect I'm not in that 41 percent. I believe my education degree with a math major is more suited to what I do than someone who has a math degree and then obtained a certificate to teach.

I'm a teacher, not a mathematician, though my math skills are excellent. I'm trained to teach math and am highly qualified to do so.

Richard Hawkins
Dewitt, Michigan

### STUDENT GRADING

While I agree with Karen Edwards that student grading has been misused (Letters, February) I think an outright ban will cause harm.

Science papers require peer review. One of the best ways for students to understand how science works is for them to duplicate the processes of science. This involves peer review of reports. Such review, when monitored, helps the student who wrote the paper and the students evaluating it.

Ellen Koivisto
San Francisco, California

### LONGER SCHOOL DAYS

I was very concerned about "Longer Days, More Learning" (Learning, February). I don't have a problem with increasing the number of school days, but I do think a longer day hurts more than it helps.

As a parent, I feel the time I spend with my children is important. I don't want them to spend more time with their teacher than with me, and I certainly don't want them to receive the majority of their nurturing and emotional development from that teacher.

As a special education teacher, I would quit before I would work an eight-hour-day with my students. My day starts at 8:15, and by 2:00, most of my students have had it.

My vote is a big *no* on extended days, both as parent and as teacher.

Julie Cunigan
Galt, California

### READING AND SPEAKING

I'm convinced that if children were taught to speak proper English, they would have an easier route to reading.

I'm reminded of a young boy named Nathaniel, aged 10, who repeatedly said "are class" and "are teacher." When he saw the word "our" in print, he stopped, confused.

Shauna, aged six, shared how she loved her pet golden retriever and called him a "dogue" to rhyme with "Vogue." The word "dog" in print didn't connect for her. Equally frustrating were "log" and "smog."

Another student, 16 years old, said, "I be just playing video games and she walk in." I explained the proper use of "to be" and asked him to read: "I was playing video games when my mother walked in." He read this with difficulty.

If we were more attuned to the necessity of speaking properly and clearly to our children, they might better understand printed words.

Cynthia Linthicum
Baltimore, Maryland

### TEACHER AIDES

Do the majority of K-1 classrooms have aides? If not, are they all going as crazy as I am?

I have 20 students and an aide who comes twice a week for 30 minutes. To have small group time with the kids, I have to prepare centers to keep the others busy with literacy tasks. This, in addition to planning for small reading groups and working in all the rest of the subjects, is overwhelming!

I know in Kentucky all kindergartens have full-time aides—this must be heaven!

Brenda Matthews
Hot Springs, Arkansas

## Let's Talk

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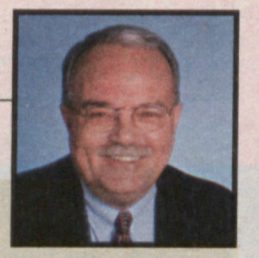
*Letters are edited for length and clarity.*

## President's Viewpoint

BY BOB CHASE



# Educators All!

**We can't spell "respect" without the letters E-S-P.**

Can we talk? About something that many folks within our Association prefer not to talk about? It's no secret that, in America's public schools, education support staff often are consigned to second-class status. In most school districts, our ESP colleagues are undervalued, underpaid, and often overlooked.

These are the hard realities. But when these same ugly realities rear their heads within our Association and in interactions among NEA members, we must not tolerate this.

This month's *NEA Today* reports on successful efforts by ESP members to rally support for their local public schools. As these stories from Oregon and New Jersey make vividly clear, our Association is strongest when teachers and education support staff work shoulder to shoulder—and when we speak up with a united voice.

Bear in mind that education support personnel are far more likely than teachers to live in the community surrounding their schools. They are more likely to reflect the community's racial and ethnic make-up.

And in addition to being education support staff, they are also lay leaders in their houses of worship, coaches in youth athletic leagues, activists in local civic associations. They are respected adults, often with special standing in their communities.

Don't misunderstand me. As a teacher for a quarter century, I respect teachers' primacy within the classroom. Likewise, I believe that teachers must take the lead in organizing their schools for academic excellence.

**Does anyone seriously believe that we can achieve excellence in our schools without the participation of the entire staff of educators?**

My point is simply that our ESP colleagues also serve on the front lines. They are typically the first people that students and parents see upon entering a public school. They are there when a student needs a sympathetic ear or a helping hand. And they are often hard at work, assisting teachers, long after the school doors have closed for the day. In short, they are fellow educators who deserve respect no less than teachers.

More to the point, does anyone seriously believe that we can achieve excellence in our schools without the participation of the entire staff of educators—including the 40 percent who call themselves education support personnel? Of course not!

This is why our ESP colleagues need more than respect. They need access to high quality professional development. They need to have time to confer and plan with their colleagues. And they should be given a realistic opportunity to continue their education.

Most urgently, ESPs need our support in their struggle for better pay and benefits. It is appalling to think that many support staffers are paid so little that their sons and daughters qualify for free or reduced-cost school meals. Likewise, it is unacceptable that many have no job protections or due process rights.

I was a social studies teacher, not a math teacher. But I know successful organizations are about addition, not subtraction. We are strongest when we embrace a larger, broader, more inclusive vision.

On that score, it bears remembering that we are not the National Teachers Association. We are the National Education Association. And we all are more effective as a unified team.

There's an old-fashioned word for this unity. It's called solidarity. And there's an old-fashioned glue that makes solidarity stick. It's called mutual respect. As teachers and support staff, we are united in our commitment to children and public education. Let's also be united in our commitment to each other.

*Comments? E-mail Bob Chase at BobChase@nea.org.*

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# Senioritis Has Set In

**Every year about this time, this veteran economics teacher notices the signs of senioritis—everything from lethargy to absence. He proposes some cures.**

BY DARWIN CH'EN

Here we go again. If you're a high school teacher, and especially a teacher of all seniors, you know it's that time of year when an epidemic of humongous proportions takes control of students. It's the deadly senioritis.

When students sit as stiffly as cadavers in their seats, don't volunteer any signs of life, and appear to be oblivious to everything around them, I know the contagion has set in.

Usually in late April but occasionally earlier, seniors display a uniquely morbid gray complexion. Their gait slows as they drag themselves through the hallways.

Very often, their backpacks follow, homework excuses from their parents peeking out from the untied and flapping tops.

The first and most recognized sympton of senioritis is the sudden onset of feigned illness. Conversations with parents may sound like this:

"Mom, I feel really sick today."

"That's okay, you told me you were getting good grades. You can afford to take a day off."

"Could you call in for me, please?"

"Why don't you call in yourself? If they don't believe you, tell them to call me at the office. Bye, honey. Get well, soon, okay?"

The mother smiles, kisses her ill daughter gently on the cheek so as not to become infected, and then rushes out the door to work.

The student then telephones the school to say she won't be coming in because of illness.

Oh yes, and this just happens to occur on the day of a biology exam.

Other symptoms come up. A bad case of lethargy sets in. Students stare into space, fail to follow instructions, lose or never gain interest in anything concerning school, submit incomplete work, and pretend ignorance.

"I'm sorry, I don't know," is the standard response, and then it's back to the lifeless state.

After a reminder he needs to pass this class to graduate, he smiles sweetly, "I'm sorry, I really don't know," then he returns to the hypnagogic state.

This disease does not restrict itself to a gender, or race, or intelligence. It's just there.

Recently, the National Commission on the High School Senior Year noted that the K-12 curriculum is often not aligned with college or the world of work, "and nowhere are these deficiencies more pronounced than during the senior year of high school." Students routinely ignore the high school's academic demands. Senioritis sets in. The commission hasn't offered any solutions yet, but I'd suggest three.

Bob Riha, Jr.

***California high school teacher Darwin Ch'en proposes a three-point plan to stomp out the senioritis epidemic.***

First, let's lower senior high classes to 12 students per class. A recent study lasting several decades concluded that smaller classes promote better learning. Individual attention increased and the students' ability to stay on task increased dramatically. Experts documented a statistically significant connection between smaller class size and closer student-to-teacher relationships and consistently higher test scores.

Second, we should institute a state-mandated test that would set a minimum score seniors would have to get in specific subjects, which here in California would be courses such as U.S. history and U.S. government and economics.

This would encourage performance in the state and initiate competition within the individual high schools.

States would gain status by setting a minimum, verifiable standard, while providing alternate programs for students who received low scores.

The last part of my cure for senioritis would set senior class time between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. (including time for physical education).

This would address several issues: Students would be awake and ready to learn in their smaller classes. Again, studies confirm that teens learn much better if their classes start later.

Latchkey students would no longer exist.

More importantly, university studies have determined students who are occupied during the hours of 3 and 5 p.m. are less subject to violence, less likely to engage in physically destructive behavior, and less likely to join a gang.

Parents, especially those who work, could breathe a little easier, knowing their kids are at school during these key hours.

All of these potential remedies are at least worth a try. Without some significant changes, we're going to continue to see widescale outbreaks of senioritis. It's time to act. Too many seniors are wasting their time ... and ours. ✔

---

*Darwin Ch'en teaches economics to high school seniors, at Capistrano Valley High School in Mission Viejo in southern California. He's been teaching for 29 years.*



As many of you already know, the online version of *NEA Today* is a one-stop place to do many of the tasks quickly that used to take a long time. At www.nea.org/neatoday, you can:

- Change your address.
- Vote on a Debate column (and see the vote total instantaneously).
- Send a letter to the editor.
- Submit an article for the My Turn first-person column that runs each month on page 7.
- Pass along a favorite Web site, piece of software, or online learning activity.

**Bill Fischer**
*editor*

There are also links off the *NEA Today* site to other useful online sites, including, of course, the main NEA site, www.nea.org.

And as many of you have found out, the online version is a great way to research topics that have likely been covered in *NEA Today*. The archives contain most of the articles from all of the issues from 1997 to the present.

Beginning with this issue, we're making some changes in the online version of *NEA Today*, which is posted just after the printed copies come off press and enter the mail stream.

One change we've made is to add brief descriptions to the cover story topics from previous issues.

This will allow you to check immediately if this is the story you're interested in reading.

If you or friends and relatives want to find some information that you believe appeared in *NEA Today*, the online edition is your best bet. Thousands of libraries around the country also carry *NEA Today*.

Of course, if you can't go online or have to have a print copy of a particular article, we will send you a copy.

What we can't do is fill the request that comes in frequently from students, the one that reads: "Send me everything you have about teaching and education, and send it right away."

Bill Fischer

# ESP on a Mission

*Bus driver Daylene Davis was one of many support staffers whose fight for better schools turned the tide of public opinion.*

Photos by Carole Archer

Last year Lebanon, Oregon, was a town that seemed to have given up on itself. The central part of the middle school, located right at the entrance to town, was condemned and boarded up. Modular classrooms were strewn across the grounds in front of the doomed school, replacing a beautiful grove of oak trees.

The school had once been the pride of the town. Now it was an eyesore. Several elementary schools were on the verge of being condemned, too.

People stopped moving in. "We were on our way to becoming a nothing town," says Janis Eggert, a school bus driver and president of the Lebanon Association of Classified Employees.

But today the town is making a comeback.

And Lebanon's resurgence illustrates the important role that education support personnel—the fastest-growing segment of the NEA membership, now 327,000 strong—play in advancing the cause of education.

## Link to the Community

Support staff usually live closer to a school than teachers do, so they form a crucial, living link between a school and its neighborhood.

That can translate into political support for education.

And political support was the main thing the schools were lacking in this small town 70 miles south of Portland.

School board members had been recalled. One superintendent was so unpopular, his contract was bought out to make him leave. Another superintendent, the one who cut down the oak trees, infuriated the residents.

Schools were crumbling because voters had soundly defeated construction bonds three times in a row. When officials said they needed more money, people simply didn't believe them.

A pro-education group that included representatives of Lebanon's educators hired a consultant to help find a way to pass the bonds. The consultant took opinion polls and offered this advice: Don't try it now. You're not ready yet. The voters are too hostile.

But waiting, to the educators and their community allies, was not an option. Instead, they launched an energetic public information campaign

## How support staff teamed up with teachers to save the schools of Lebanon, Oregon.

about the state of the schools and assembled an army of election workers.

That army phoned, knocked on doors, wrote letters, put up yard signs. Businesspeople, doctors, senior citizens—anybody who was willing to help rebuild Lebanon—joined the support staff and teachers at the phone banks and in the neighborhood canvassing.

Every household received at least five calls and two door knocks.

"People said, 'Why do you keep calling me?' And we answered, 'Because it's that important,'" says Martin Jones, a fourth grade teacher and president of the Lebanon Education Association.

Supplementing these formal campaign activities was the critical informal campaign—conversations with friends, relatives, and neighbors.

Most of Lebanon's teachers live outside the district, but 85 percent of the support staff are local residents. Their community roots proved vital. More than half of them worked in the campaign.

Daylene Davis, a school bus driver and NEA member with children in Lebanon schools, worked the phone banks. She'd actually voted against the last bond proposal herself, because "I wasn't happy with the district. The school buildings should never have been let go the way they were. Why give them more money?"

But as she drove children to schools all over town, Davis saw the terrible conditions of the buildings. And she thought the community oversight committee that bond proponents included in their plan would hold down waste.

So Davis told some of the voters she called about her own opposition, as a fellow resident, to the last bond proposal. Then she told them why she had changed her mind.

"It was difficult," she recalls. "A lot of times I got yelled at."

But Davis also swayed a lot of voters —and impressed a lot of colleagues.

By chance, the person working the phones across from Davis was her youngest son's third grade teacher, Bonnie Phillips. Phillips came away impressed with Davis's technique. "She had a way of moving into her line, a super delivery," Phillips recalls. "It was fun to listen to."

### Voting Day

The campaigners had a double task before them. Under Oregon law, they had to convince a majority of those voting to support the bonds, and they also had to ensure at least a 50 percent turnout.

As the campaign drew to a close last May 9, Martin Jones, Daylene Davis, and Bonnie Phillips were worried. Only Janis Eggert was confident. "I had faith that this community would come through, once they knew what needed to be done," says Eggert.

She was right. The grassroots campaign spearheaded by support staff produced a 60 percent turnout, with 54 percent voting Yes.

Lebanon has now embarked on a new path.

### Ties That Bind

Teachers and support staff have been invited to work with the architects in designing the new buildings.

In three years, there will be two new schools. All the salvageable old schools will be renovated, and some will sport new additions.

There will even be new trees, helping to restore the feeling that Lebanon cares about itself and its children.

Says Eggert, "If I die today, I'll die knowing I made a difference."

Phillips believes the commitment of the support staff to the campaign saved the day for Lebanon because of their neighborhood ties.

"Anytime you vote on something that will take money out of someone's pocket, you've got to have the people next door excited about it," she says.

"We had a lot of the people next door excited about it."

*—Alain Jehlen*

***Association leaders Janis Eggert and Martin Jones survey the once-beautiful campus of Lebanon's partially boarded-up middle school.***

## A Contract Only Unity Could Win

**School employees in Hamilton Township, New Jersey, have worked without a contract more times than they care to remember— once, it was for three straight years. But last September, when 1,400 Hamilton teachers and school support staff took a stand and struck to demand a contract, they won so much community support that the school board offered them an agreement in just eight days.**

**"A big reason for our success," says Barbara Allen, a middle school teacher and vice president of the Hamilton Township Education Association, "is that we have a strong, inclusive Association. Our diversity gave us a broad base of support."**

**Of the 1,400 HTEA members who struck, 900 are teachers and 500 are paraprofessionals, electricians, and other school support staff.**

**"Our members have deep community roots," says Allen. "When we stood up for kids on the picket line, the community stood up for us."**

**Also standing up for the teachers and support staff were 400 school district secretaries, who honored the HTEA picket line even though they belonged to a separate association and had already settled their contract—and despite the fact that they were being fined $50 for every day they missed work.**

**"The secretaries were wonderful," says Allen. "When they joined with us, it made us all closer and more determined."**

**"The unity we experienced strengthened our resolve," says Dolores McPhillips, a special education personal care assistant who was on the picket line every day.**

**"We weren't out there for high wages," McPhillips adds. "For some of us, getting a contract means knowing whether we can keep making a living. When everyone turned out to support us, we knew we were doing the right thing. Parents actually came out to bring us coffee and doughnuts."**

**An HTEA rally during the strike drew 3,000 enthusiastic supporters.**

**By the end of day eight of the strike, the school board offered HTEA a three-year agreement providing 13.55 percent pay raises. The settlement also nullified fines against individual school employees.**

**"Everyone knows that we're a strong Association now, and that all school district workers will be there for each other," says Allen.**

**"Friendships were formed. You can feel, walking through the school, that we all have stronger bonds."**

NJEA

## Q&A

# Ten Voices Can Do It Together

Karen Mahurin, a school secretary from Kenai, Alaska, is president of the NEA's National Council of Educational Support Professionals.

**What's the one thing you'd want all NEA members to know about ESP members?**
Actually, I have two things.

First, we are not recognized for our contributions to the kids. We are seen as less than teachers.

One time, I was at a state convention and worked with someone for more than two days. He assumed I was a teacher. When I told him I was a secretary, he literally turned his back and didn't say another word to me for the rest of the day.

Now, that's extreme. Most people aren't like that. Often, in the schools, we're all one family. But it's an extreme example of a lot of little things that do happen.

Second, many teachers assume we wish we were teachers, but we don't.

In my K-2 school, with all the kids, the teachers, the parents, I'm on the go all the time.

I want to be the friendly office lady, not the mean office lady. The office is like the school's living room. If it's warm and inviting, parents will come in and stay awhile.

I love being the school secretary.

**What's the biggest draw for educational support staff to join the NEA?**
Well, the liability insurance is very important. Many schools don't have nurses and ESP are being asked to do medical procedures—tracheotomies, blood sugar testing, catheterization. In my case, we had only a half-time nurse.

With the teacher shortage, ESP are being asked to supervise students by themselves. And we're in a lawsuit-happy environment.

But it's also people coming together to advocate for themselves collectively.

We tend to be a quiet group. One voice may be hesitant to speak up. But 10 voices can do it together.

And with the public focus on education, people want to work together with teachers for funding and other school legislation—we're uniting against common enemies. ✔

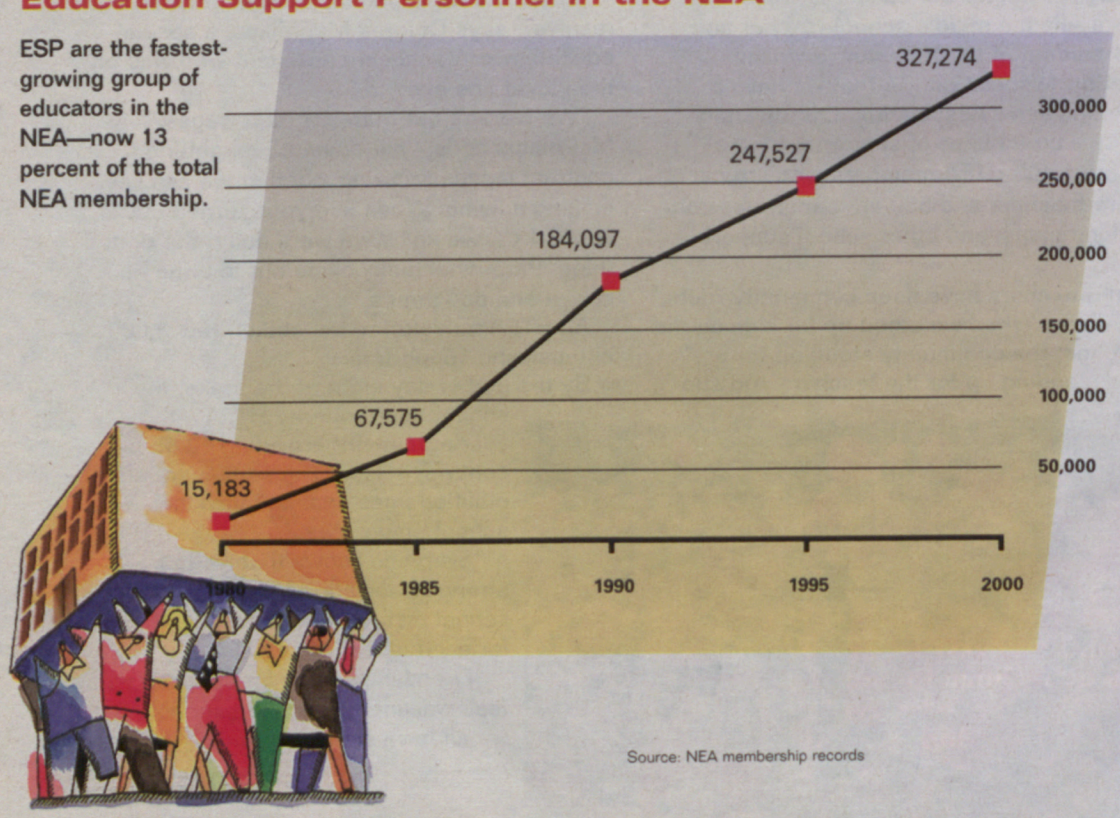
Jeff Schultz

***NEA ESP leader Karen Mahurin: "I love being the school secretary."***

For more: contact Karen Mahurin at kmahurin@kpbsd.k12.ak.us.

## Education Support Personnel in the NEA

ESP are the fastest-growing group of educators in the NEA—now 13 percent of the total NEA membership.




Source: NEA membership records

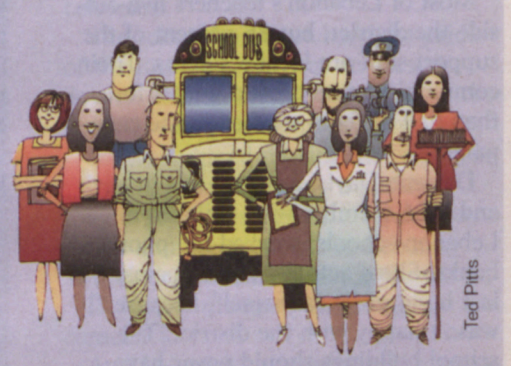
## Resources

● NEA has a new set of brochures with extensive information for all educators about the nine categories of ESP members—who they are, what they do, and what their main job concerns are.

For example, among paraeducators, 96 percent are women, 68 percent have attended college, 86 percent do volunteer community work, 54 percent believe their job descriptions don't accurately describe their work, and 25 percent have no job description at all.

To obtain these brochures or to find out more about the NEA's ESP activities and resources, contact Michelle Hicks at 202/822-7131 or E-mail mhicks@nea.org.

Ted Pitts




Ted Pitts

● The NEA's ESP Web site has news and useful information—everything from grants available from the NEA, to news about ESP, to safety tips.

There's also a bulletin board and links to other relevant sites. That's www.nea.org/esp/.

● The NEA ESP E-mail list helps ESP members exchange information and discuss issues. Among the recent topics: what locals are doing to gain recognition for the contributions of support staff, news about contracting out and how to stop it, how to win professional development opportunities, and ESP participation in Read Across America.

The list is open to all members and staff who have access to Internet E-mail. More information is available at the Web site.

To subscribe, send a message to lyris@list.nea.org. Leave the "Subject" line blank and type SUBSCRIBE ESP in the body of the message. Or subscribe on the ESP Web site.

● A local Web site can be a good way to keep information flowing. The NEA Web site includes a sample Web site designed for ESP locals, including all the necessary files for the site and instructions for changing them to suit local needs. It's at www.nea.org/esp/espnea/sample/index.html.

# Should teachers and support personnel be in separate NEA locals?

**DEBBIE NASH** ***has been a school secretary for four years at Brighton West Elementary School in Brighton, a rural town in southwest Illinois. She was a teacher aide in the district for 10 years prior. Nash took part in organizing the Southwestern ESP Association and is now its president.***

## yes

My argument for separate locals representing teachers and education support personnel begins with their different interests.

The concerns of non-certified staff are often classification specific, requiring close, individual attention from union leaders.

In my local, we have 12 different classifications, each with their own issues. The bus situation, for example, is very complicated. We have a lot of bus driver language in our contract, and I spend much of my time as ESP president addressing these concerns.

Other issues—such as prohibition of subcontracting, prohibition of split workdays, health and safety language, and negotiated job descriptions—may not affect teachers, but they're very important to us.

Is it realistic to expect a large, wall-to-wall unit in which non-certified staff are a minority to make our unique ESP bargaining issues a priority?

In Illinois, we shun generic, boilerplate contracts. Instead, we have helped ESP locals, even very small ones, tailor collective bargaining agreements to address their specific concerns.

These locals—some with 25 or fewer members—have a track record of success.

One local that has only 20 members was faced with a management plan to subcontract the custodial staff. This local organized a community campaign that led management to drop their proposal.

Another small local, after 28 bargaining sessions for a first contract, brought local, state, and national attention to its drive for bargaining rights. With strong community support, this local achieved a first-class contract.

My second argument for separate locals is this: A combined bargaining unit has to continuously overcome the tendency for ESP members to lack confidence in their role.

The reality is that because of educational backgrounds and their roles in the school, many ESP may feel subservient or less important than teachers. As a result, ESP are often reluctant to present their ideas forcefully—even if they have a comparatively large membership, as we do. Our teacher's Association has 150 members, and we have 100.

As a separate unit, we develop our own local leadership with the expertise and skills we need to be effective. Members don't become passive dues payers. They grow and get involved.

We have the ability to stand tall on our own. We can build strong, independent Associations that can gain the respect of the administration and the school board.

In addition, most ESP are long-time residents of the district and are very influential in political matters. They are able to quickly organize and marshal votes. Therefore, legislators make themselves available and listen to their legislative concerns.

Although separate, we do strive to work together with fellow teacher locals, as equals, on a range of common concerns that may include bargaining.

We know our issues. We can achieve our objectives. With our own organization, we have a clear, strong voice. ✔

**BILL REILLY** **has been involved in education since 1975. For the last 17 years, he's been an educational technician at Auburn Middle School in Auburn, Maine. Reilly has negotiated contracts for certified educators, paraprofessionals, and secretaries in the Auburn Education Association.**

## no

I believe education support personnel and certificated personnel can effectively work together for the common good of the entire organization.

Each group may question whether the other side can understand their individual issues and give their group the needed support.

But let's look briefly at the history of the labor movement.

As labor first began organizing, trade associations formed around specific skills. But these trade organizations by themselves were not very successful.

As the different skilled groups within an industry joined together, they discovered that they became more powerful.

Because of the force of union numbers speaking with one voice, management had to listen, and eventually negotiated with the union.

In the Auburn Education Association, with a little more than 300 members, we have had one negotiating team for all bargaining units—teachers, secretaries, and "assistants"—since 1991.

It's working so well that recently, the bus drivers, custodians, and maintenance personnel, who are currently members of another union, approached the AEA to become another bargaining unit under our umbrella.

These people have observed the respect that our Association has earned.

They compare the way we are treated by management with the way they, as a small local, are treated.

They want to join with us because they feel that in unity with our Association, they will have more protection—that as a wall-to-wall Association, we will have more power.

Years ago, I was asked why I, a para, was negotiating for "teachers." My flippant response was, "I am good."

Since then, I've realized that I represent not just one classification but all members of the Association.

There's no difference between a teacher and an education support person when one is facing termination for disciplinary reasons.

Nor is there a difference when a member needs sick leave to care for a loved one.

Health benefits are a concern for all members. When a school committee attacks one bargaining unit's health benefits, it follows as surely as the sun rises in the east that the committee will seek the same reduction in benefits for every other unit in the system.

In short, there is more that unites us than divides us.

It has been said that a leader must have fire in the belly.

Leadership does not depend on our classification but on that fire. There are teachers who have it, and there are ESP who have it.

It does not matter what classification I am—if I'm facing a problem, I want someone in my corner who has that fire.

When the school committee recognizes that the local Association speaks for all of its members and for all bargaining units, it becomes increasingly difficult for that committee to play one unit against the other.

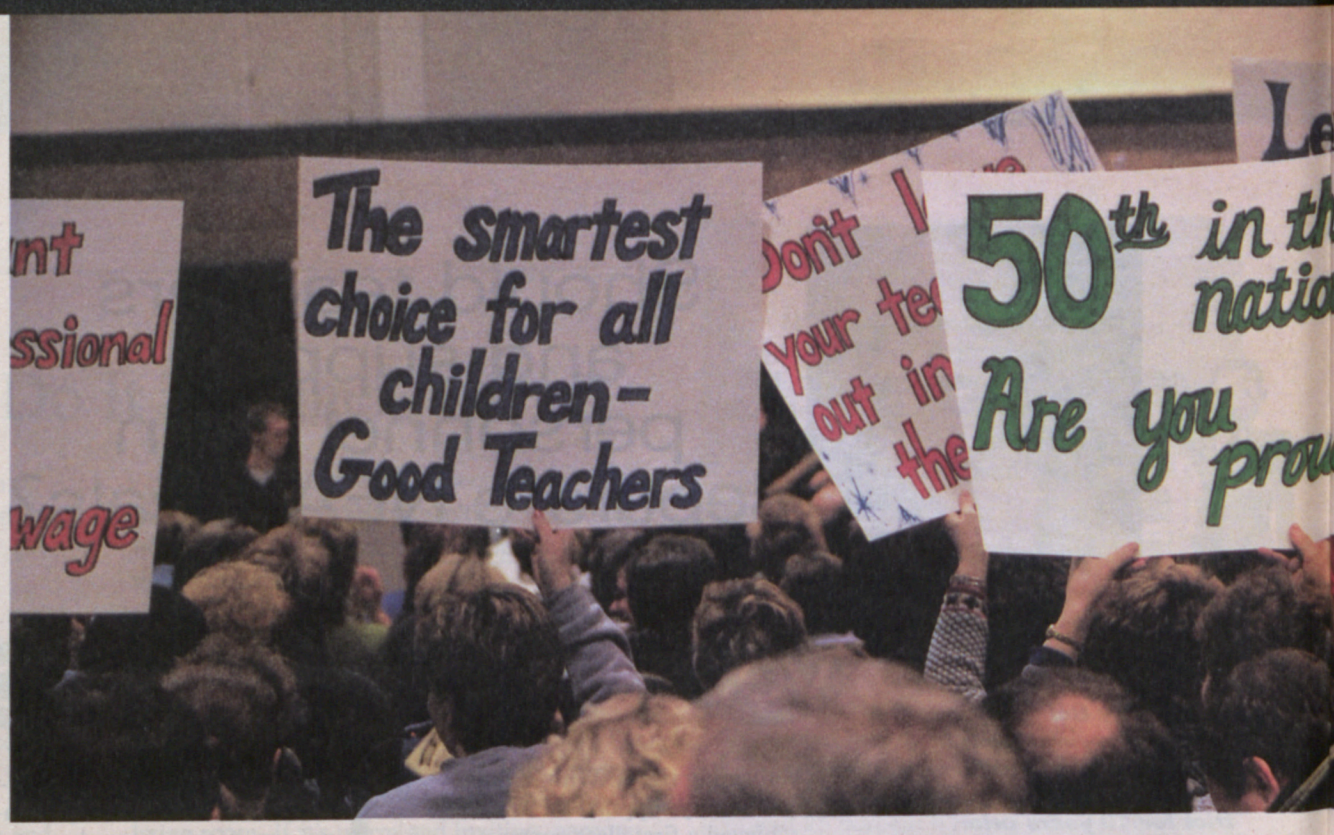
While we may be separate bargaining units, we all have the same employer.

Unity gives us power! ✔

## What's Your Opinion?

**Should Teachers and Support Personnel Be in Separate Locals?**
To vote, visit our Web site at www.nea.org/neatoday and see the results instantly.

**Should Cell Phones and Pagers Be Allowed in School?**
The tally on this Debate question from the last issue of *NEA Today:*
**28% Yes** **72% No**




# First in Quality, But 50th in Pay

**Shaken by a growing exodus of teachers from their state, North Dakota NEA members support governor's plan to boost salaries.**

Not long ago, a newly hired teacher in North Dakota's rural Sims School District No. 8 received a gut-wrenching phone call from her NEA state affiliate. It notified her that her 2000-01 starting salary, at just $15,100, made her the lowest paid public school teacher in the United States.

The North Dakota Education Association isn't bashful about sharing statistics like this. North Dakota teacher pay ranks 50th in the nation, and according to NDEA President Max Laird, many of the state's districts have salary scales with a $18,700 minimum and a $29,600 maximum. "A career salary gain for many of our teachers is just $10,000," he says.

Contrast grim stats like these with North Dakota's glowing record of student achievement, and you can see that the state's taxpayers are getting quite a bargain. North Dakota has the greatest proportion of high school grads going on to college, and its eighth grade math and science scores consistently tie for first place in the nation.

What does all this have to do with education in your state?

North Dakota's subsistence salaries "don't help other states push the envelope on teacher pay," warns Laird, a science teacher on leave from Community High School in Grand Forks. "Sooner or later, legislators in other states are bound to ask, 'Why scream about higher teacher pay when North Dakota delivers on standardized tests, yet pays its people next to nothing?'"

**"This isn't just about pay. It's about the survival of quality public education."**
—Ellen Dunn, work experience educator

Rest assured, those lawmakers won't probe the hidden costs of the North Dakota Miracle. Teachers are working extra jobs to survive, college education majors are leaving the state after graduation, and entire high school departments are being courted by out-of-state recruiters.

"We've become a fertile recruiting ground," notes Laird, "especially for school districts in Nevada, South Texas, and Minnesota. While North Dakota teachers were historically rooted in their communities, younger teachers today aren't terribly interested in staying to work for next to nothing, even if they were born and raised here."

Even many veteran educators—the folks who put North Dakota students on the top of the national charts—are starting to polish their resumes.

"I have two good friends, excellent educators with master's degrees, who are leaving the state this year," laments Ellen Dunn, a work experience educator in Fargo. "They're tired of the low pay, lack of respect, and lack of support. They feel that education is not valued here."

Fortunately, Dunn and many other members of the Fargo Education Association aren't quite ready to write off their home state. Even while wearing "Tell Them" buttons to protest the "chipping away" of health care benefits in their district, they donate one dollar from the sale of each button to a scholarship fund for district graduates seeking to major in education in college.

"North Dakotans are positive people," stresses Dunn, an NDEA regional director. "We want to retain quality teachers so that this state's kids can continue to be first in the nation."

Slowly but surely, NDEA's positive

***NEA Executive Vice President Reg Weaver, left, urges ralliers to educate legislators on the need to boost teacher salaries.***

Photos by Linda Harsche, NDEA

***Despite a heavy snowfall, NEA members pack Fargo's civic center to rally for public schools.***

attitude is shaping public debate over education in the Peace Garden State.

Some encouraging signs:

■ **North Dakota's new governor supports a teacher raise.** Throughout Election 2000, NDEA worked diligently with both candidates for governor to make public education and teacher recruitment/retention the top campaign issues.

Now newly elected Republican Governor John Hoeven, with NDEA support, is proposing the creation of a $50 million state fund to raise teacher salaries by $3,500 over the 2001-03 biennium.

"North Dakota ranks at the bottom of teacher salaries nationwide, and for many districts it is becoming increasingly hard to recruit or retain educators," Hoeven said when announcing his plan. "It is time to make a serious commitment to improving teacher pay and benefits."

While the governor's plan, which enjoys bipartisan support, is "not the be-all and end-all," says NDEA President Laird, "it moves us in the right direction and provides hope for the future."

■ **NEA members are saying, 'Enough is Enough.'** Alarmed by their states' growing disinvestment in public education, NDEA and Education Minnesota affiliates in the bi-state Fargo-Moorehead region organized a citizen's rally for public education on a snowy weekday evening in January.

Carrying handmade signs, some 1,500 educators, parents, and NEA Student Program members jammed Fargo's Centennial Hall, where they heard Association leaders—from NEA and two state affiliates—urge them to persuade North Dakota and Minnesota legislators to pass budgets that invest in public schools and alleviate the teacher shortage in both states.

"You can't expect to pay people the worst and get the best," said NEA Executive Vice President Reg Weaver. "I'm tired of seeing the best teachers leaving.

"What are we going to do after the rally?" Weaver asked. "We've got some persuading to do. It's not right to freeze North Dakota teachers at 50th in the nation. Let's get behind Governor Hoeven's pay plan. He can't do it himself—he needs your help!"

This event was a "shot in the arm" for teachers, says Ellen Dunn, a member of the rally planning committee.

"When members ask me, 'Now what?' I encourage them to come to forums with legislators sponsored by the League of Women Voters and to NDEA's Lobby Days, where they can speak positively to legislators about what's going on in our public schools."

■ **The public is learning about the crisis in North Dakota schools.** Through an imaginative media campaign financed jointly by NEA and NDEA, taxpayers are learning about the need to recruit and retain quality educators and to support Governor Hoeven's teacher pay plan.

NEA's financial contribution to this ad campaign sends a signal to North Dakota members that they don't stand alone. "We feel incredibly good about having a national organization that's there when we have needs," stresses NDEA President Laird. "We're grateful that NEA colleagues across the U.S. appreciate what we're trying to do."

"We need their continued support," adds Ellen Dunn. "This isn't just about salaries. It's about the survival of quality public education in this state." ✔

## Heroes & Zeroes

▲ **Hawaii NEA members have worked without a new contract since January 1999 and they face a governor who bargains in the media. But they're united and determined to win a fair raise for all teachers, new and veteran. On February 8, 7,000 of the Hawaii State Teachers Association's 8,000 members on Oahu rallied at the state capitol for a decent contract, while 3,000 others rallied on other islands. Many protesters "said low pay and an increased workload make their jobs unbearable," reported the *Honolulu Advertiser*, "and while they don't want to strike, they are ready to join a picket line if necessary."**

*Honolulu Advertiser*

▼ **Recently, South Dakota state legislator Matt McCaulley introduced a bill allowing anyone to teach in a public school. When McCaulley asked if people would want a 22-year-old or Governor Bill Janklow to teach a government course, one unidentified NEA member sent a letter to the media suggesting that "Mr. McCaulley has teaching confused with being a guest lecturer.**

**"Does Governor Janklow want to prepare 175 exciting and meaningful lectures?" asked this irate educator. "Will the governor mind if I call him at home while he is eating dinner to find out why my daughter's grade isn't higher every week? Is he interested in decorating for the prom, running a concession stand, chaperoning cheerleaders…"**

**Okay, okay, we get the point. But does McCaulley?**

▲ **When actor Al Pacino was recognized for lifetime achievement at the 58th Annual Golden Globe Awards, he thanked the teacher who encouraged him to enter the acting field and blurted, "I just love teachers."**

**Folks in the audience gave him a huge ovation. They knew—we all know—a teacher who made a difference.**

**For an update on the status of North Dakota teacher pay legislation, go to www.ndea.org/legislative.html.**

# Iowa NEA Members Go Public on Critical Teacher Shortage

Iowa, the state with the second-highest proportion of high school grads going on to college, is ranked 35th in educator pay and has a teacher turnover rate that's twice the national average.

Small wonder that this high-achieving state has a critical teacher shortage.

On February 3, Iowans for Public Schools—a broad coalition that includes the Iowa State Education Association—publicized this crisis during a media-friendly town meeting in Des Moines. Present, along with reporters and camera crews, were more than 800 educators and concerned citizens from across the state.

Speakers, including everyone from Governor Tom Vilsack to Iowa Teacher of the Year Gail Wortmann, reinforced the message that the teacher shortage threatens the quality of education that Iowans have come to respect.

"It's time to put things back in balance and make sure that quality education continues to happen," ISEA President Jolene Franken told the crowd. "It's about respect. It's about priorities. It's about time."

The first step, she said, is to bring educators' salaries up to a more "professional and competitive" level.

Following the town meeting, some 500 sign-carrying ISEA members walked to the state capitol, where they delivered 2,000 postcards and letters urging lawmakers to take action.

"We presented a positive message that won't be forgotten," said event co-chair Mike Beranek, an elementary teacher from West Des Moines. "Now is just the beginning. We have to keep this issue at the top of discussions in the legislature." ✔

ISEA

***Iowa educators march to their state capitol in Des Moines.***

Photos by Dennis Nett

# Moving to the Front of the Bus

**Members of an NEA affiliate in rural New York State bargain a pay schedule that will enhance ESP recruitment and retention.**

Support staffers in New York's rural Morrisville-Eaton Central School District are a pretty typical bunch of ESP. They enjoy working with children, and more than 75 percent of them live in the community.

Moreover, Morrisville-Eaton ESP respond instinctively to kids in need. Some 15 of them volunteer each year in a toy "duck race" to fund research of a rare blood disease that debilitates a local elementary student.

"These are probably the best ESP a school district could want," says district Superintendent Nelson Bauersfeld.

"They're loyal, they come to work every day, and we have to send them home when they're not feeling well—they want to come *back*," adds Bauersfeld. "They're solid people, the kind of people you want working with kids."

But until very recently, the district didn't show appreciation for its support staff in the pay envelope.

When the district's 61-member NEA ESP affiliate, Morrisville-Eaton Central School District Educational Support Personnel, went to the bargaining table in the spring of 2000, 29 percent of its members were still earning less than $6.50 an hour.

Worse yet, building cleaners and food service workers were starting at $5.79, and "pay rates were all over the place," recalls local President Al Beck, a 13-year bus driver. "People could drive 15 miles down the road to another district and earn more money."

But as bargaining began, Morrisville-Eaton ESP learned their real value to the employer. The district desperately needed them for its two schools and wanted to keep them from making that 15-mile drive.

**"We're seeing ESP change from being needy individuals to employees whose work allows them to live."**

—Lenny Lavalette, affiliate relations director, NEA-New York

One token of the district's regard for ESP was the red, fleecy—and pricey—all-weather jackets it issued to its transportation work force, each bearing the name of driver and school.

"I was envious of those jackets. I wanted one," chuckles NEA-New York UniServ rep Bob Maclin. "When I saw them, I told the members, 'Your district has money for an ESP raise.'"

Fortunately, the district wasn't inclined to play games with money—or the incomes of its support staff. "Most ESP reside in this district and aren't looking to go to other places," notes Superintendent Bauersfeld. "But the bottom line is that they have to feed their families, too."

"When we sat down initially with the union," he says, "both sides agreed on three basic goals that served as our frame of reference throughout negotiations. We had to reach an agreement that provided people a living wage, enabled us to recruit and retain staff, and was equitable for all."

The final settlement, reached last autumn, goes a long way in meeting those goals. The new 2000–03 contract boosts ESP pay by almost 19 percent over three years and establishes a new nine-year, three-step pay schedule to move employees to a living wage.

The new schedule boosts minimum pay to $10.50 an hour for drivers and mechanics, $9.50 for cooks, $7.50 for aides and clericals, and $7.25 for building cleaners and food service workers.

And it credits workers for seniority and experience, moving, for instance, a seven-year teacher aide to $10.00 an hour and a seven-year driver to $13.50.

Other contract gains include improved bereavement and clothing allowance language, district-paid license fees for bus drivers with five years of service, and new job classifications that conform with New York state civil service titles.

The Morrisville-Eaton agreement provides a minimum across-the-board increase of 3.5 percent a year over three years and immediately boosts the pay of some ESP by as much as $2.25 an hour. "In effect, this contract tells people that if they come to work for this district, they can expect a $1.50 raise every fourth year, even if a

## THE BOTTOM LINE

**STATE TESTS:** According to a new 50-state report, many state tests don't adequately reflect the education standards they are designed to measure and may misrepresent student achievement. www.edweek.org/sreports/qc01.

**CONSTRUCTION:** As school facilities deteriorate, U.S. school enrollment will increase by 4 million over the next eight years. The cash burden on districts to build and fix schools will be $200 billion. www.nsba.org/advocacy/issue_briefs.

**ESTATE TAX:** Only the richest 2 percent of Americans are subject to the federal estate tax (the only federal tax on accumulated wealth). Repeal of the tax would cost the United States $294 billion in revenues between 2002 and 2011. www.ufenet.org.

**HUNGER:** Despite a booming economy, hunger in the United States remained at the same percentage levels between 1995 and 1998, according to USDA figures. www.bread.org/hungerbasics/domestic.html.

recession hits," notes local President Beck.

This groundbreaking contract didn't drop out of the sky. It's the product of:

■ ***Member organization.*** Before bargaining began, UniServ rep Maclin focused ESP on the NEA fact of life that members are the union, and that effective bargaining isn't about "behind-the-back deals" and sellouts.

"We got a cross-section of job titles on the bargaining team," he recalls, "and I listened to complaints at staff meetings and reminded members that nobody, especially me, can ram anything down their throat."

Maclin corrected some misconceptions—like the biggie that existing contract provisions are carved in stone for the ages—and promised members that they would "know how the bargaining process really works" by the time a new contract was signed.

And, yes, the UniServ rep used the Power word. "You do something meaningful and can shut this district down easier than teachers," he reminded the troops. "Don't take a back seat or allow anyone to put a lower value on what you do for a living."

***Al Beck: 'Our old guard successfully negotiated a decent wage for newer, low-paid members.'***

■ ***Creativity.*** Morrisville-Eaton's sparkling new pay schedule wasn't lifted from some template. Al Beck researched salaries and pay scales in surrounding districts, did some math, and then collaborated with local Association Secretary Cindy Phillips, a cleaner-aide, to create a pay scale from a "clean sheet of paper."

"Cindy and I just sat down one afternoon, bumped off each other—we could get in each other's face and not take it personally—and drew up the original step system. Then we showed it to the larger team," Beck says.

"We figured out what different people were making, 'pigeonholed' them into the new schedule, and then took it into negotiations, where we and administrators tweaked it."

■ ***Support from the district.*** Beck calls Nelson Bauersfeld, now in his third year as superintendent, a "straight shooter" who kept bargaining "very civilized."

"I worked with my board of education on this because I didn't want constant staff turnover. I needed to be able to get good people, and I felt people needed to start at a better wage," Bauersfeld explains. "We tried to treat people fairly within the limits of what this community feels it can afford. Everybody feels this is a fair settlement."

■ ***Staff solidarity.*** The real heroes in this story are the better-paid Morrisville-Eaton ESP who settled for an annual 3.5 percent raise so that those on the bottom could have a real chance to move up.

"During the contract ratification vote," Bob Maclin recalls, "I asked the senior people to 'Turn to your brother and tell him he doesn't deserve this raise.' They replied, 'Yup, it's their turn. They should be brought up.'"

■ ***Maturity.*** Unlike many New York teachers, who already worked under comprehensive district personnel policies when the state's bargaining law was passed in 1967, ESP have labored for the past 34 years to build up written agreements from scratch.

"Now that the fight for basic rights like binding arbitration is behind them," says NEA-New York affiliate relations director Lenny Lavalette, "support staff are able to concentrate on salaries, just like teachers. Each year, more and more New York state ESP units like Morrisville-Eaton are reaching maturity and able to reach some nice settlements."

"Now we're seeing education support personnel change from being needy individuals to employees whose work allows them to live," Lavalette concludes. "And, after all, they care just as much about their districts as teachers and administrators do." ✔

**To contact Morrisville-Eaton Central School District ESP President Al Beck, send a fax to 315/684-9650.**

# Do'ers Profile

**PAM WILLIAMS**

■ ***Name and profession:*** Pam Williams, women's health nurse-practitioner.

■ ***Local affiliate:*** Public Health Nurse Council/Delaware State Education Association

■ ***Position:*** Council vice president

■ ***Recent accomplishments:*** Williams wears three hats—union rep, negotiations committee head, and de facto membership chair—at a time when the Public Health Nurse Council and the state are at impasse over a new contract for 140 public health nurses who work in clinics, in the field, and at the Delaware Hospital for the Chronically Ill.

It's difficult to keep a diverse, dispersed membership united throughout mediation, fact-finding, and binding arbitration, but Williams and her colleagues are finding ways to maintain morale. They're producing newsletters, exchanging information "more than management would like," and getting the Delaware State Education Association more involved in nursing issues.

Williams, who's proud of her role in helping create a fairer DSEA dues structure for nurses and K-12 support staffers, is encouraged by the Association's growing sensitivity to nurses' concerns. "DSEA has put National Nurses Day on its calendar," she reports, "and we see more articles about nurses in its newsletter, *DSEA Action.* Now we're trying to get a group together to send in more nursing news."

After bargaining a new contract, Williams and other council leaders will confront the challenges of making the PHNC organizational structure more member-friendly, and gaining legislated pay increases that put Delaware nurses on a par with counterparts in the private sector and elsewhere in the public sector.

"We've already put together a committee that has investigated nursing salaries in other states," Williams notes, "and our findings will shake management up a bit. While they keep increasing front-end salaries for nurses, they do nothing for current people."

■ ***Words of wisdom:*** "The Delaware State Education Association is a strong union, because it's locally based and very visible in the state legislature. Lawmakers know we are there. But DSEA is not a bunch of people sitting in Dover, the state capital. It's all of us.

"Members need to ask themselves, 'What am I doing for the union?' and they need to start talking to people who are active as officers and committee members. If they make the effort to reach out and find out what's going on with their dues dollars, they'll be pleasantly surprised."

*(To contact Pam Williams, send a message to pwilliams@state.de.us)*

**PARENTS:** In 1999, a higher percentage of parents with children in grades three through five were "very satisfied" with their kids' schools than were parents of kids in grades nine through 12. http://nces.gov/pubs2000/section4/indicator46.html.

**SCHOOL SIZE:** Tiny schools with high student achievement are attracting national attention. Large urban school districts are creating schools within schools to mirror the small-school setting. www.denverpost.com/news/news0207c.htm.

**TEACHER PAY:** Eighty-six percent of new teachers would choose a school with better student behavior and parental support over one with higher pay. www.publicagenda.org/specials/teachers/teachers3.htm.

**PRE-K SKILLS:** Among all three- to five-year-olds not yet enrolled in kindergarten, 51 percent can write their name, 24 percent recognize all the letters of the alphabet, and 57 percent can count to 20 or higher. http://nces.ed.gov.

# Playing a Supporting Role

**In Washington State, member-run peer support and mediation programs offer advice—and an ear—in a confidential and non-threatening manner.**

Last year, after 22 years in the teaching profession, Washington Education Association member Dan Mills reached the breaking point.

"I'd taught fifth graders and third graders my entire career, but volunteered to switch to first grade because we were short some staff," says Mills, who teaches at Coupeville Elementary School. "While I anticipated it might be a challenging transition, I had no idea just how hard it would be."

For the first time in his professional life, Mills felt as though he was failing.

"Everything seemed to go wrong, and I couldn't pinpoint the cause," he says. "Some days I would blame myself, some days I would blame the kids. I started to lose control and confidence, and knew I needed to get some help."

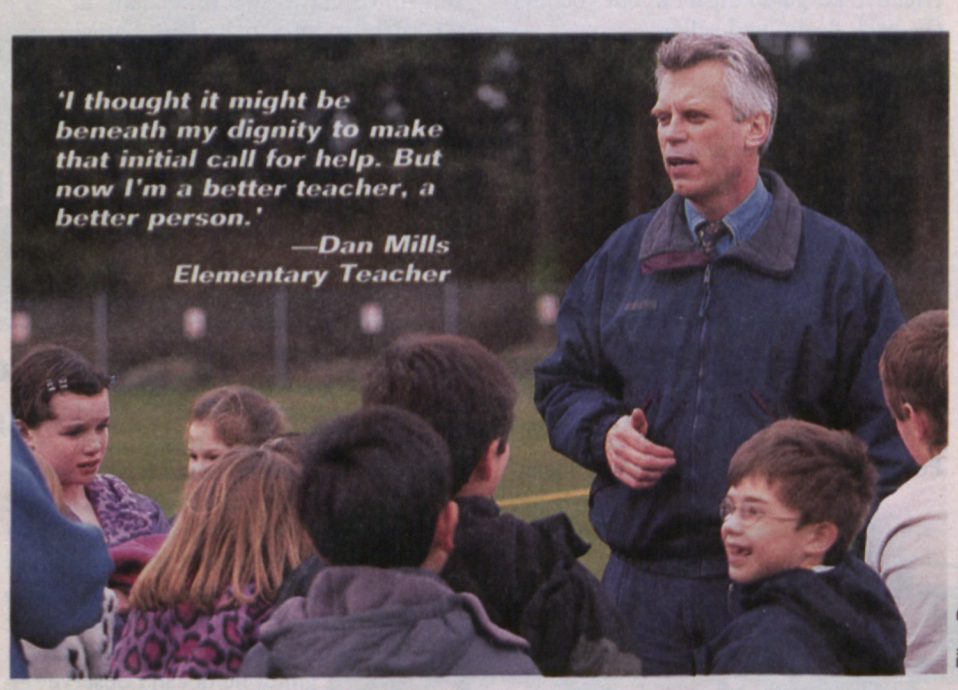
That's when Mills turned to the Peer Support Program run by members in Washington Education Association's Fourth Corner region, located in the northwestern part of the state.

This program, born more than a decade ago, helps teachers, ESP, and higher education employees work out personal and professional issues in a safe, confidential, and non-threatening manner. Participants—who can't be on probation with their school or district—refer themselves to the program.

Through the years, Peer Support has helped experienced teachers overcome burnout, new teachers handle difficult work assignments or classroom management problems, and other educators who need help preparing lessons and structuring assignments.

This program has also provided relief for members whose personal or family issues—from divorce to the death of a loved one—have rolled over into their professional lives.

"We've helped a wide range of people, from those who just want to tune up their skills to those going through extremely difficult personal crisis," says Denny Cleary, chairman of the 17-member committee that oversees the program. "It's a safe haven, 100 percent confidential. No one knows that the person is getting help."


'I thought it might be beneath my dignity to make that initial call for help. But now I'm a better teacher, a better person.'
—Dan Mills
Elementary Teacher

Ellen Banner

### A Simple Process

Once a member decides to seek help, he or she submits a one-page form to the committee, which uses the information to assign one of its members as a "case manager" to the new client.

After meeting with the client to assess the situation, the case manager reports back to the entire panel during a weekly conference call. Together they brainstorm how best to help that person.

"Among all 17 of us, we usually can think of three or four people who would be a match for the client," says Cleary. "If the person who needs help is dealing with a professional issue, we'll think of someone who matches the client in grade level or subject. If it's a personal issue, we'll find someone who has faced similar circumstances."

Cleary then contacts the intended mentor, explains the situation without naming names, and asks if that person would be willing to help. Mentors are paid up to $100 per day for their time—if they choose to charge for their services—and are reimbursed for mileage and expenses. The Association also pays for the mentors' substitutes.

"Because we're composed of 33 local Associations in three counties, we bring people together who don't initially know each other," says Phil Becker, the WEA UniServ director who helps manage the program. "That's a large contributor to our success. It's completely non-threatening. Nothing is reported to administrators or colleagues—it's just one professional in this town helping another one in that town."

### One-On-One Support

For Dan Mills, the collaboration with another teacher was all he needed to realize that the struggles he was facing centered around two basic issues: He needed specific curriculum strategies aimed at his younger students, and he needed classroom management help.

"I realized—with my mentor's assistance—that I was still teaching as if my kids were third graders," he says. "I wasn't taking into account the enormous developmental difference between a third grader and a first grader."

Mills spent one full day being observed by his mentor, a veteran first grade male teacher. Five weeks later, they spent another day together.

"My mentor put me at ease by his tone and demeanor the minute he walked through my door, stating upfront, 'I'm just another teacher. Let me see how I can help,'" recalls Mills.

"Throughout the day, he made great suggestions and gave me specific practical strategies that he uses himself. He

## THE BOTTOM LINE

**EDUCATION PRIORITY:** In a recent Gallup Poll, 50 percent of Americans said education should be a "top priority" for the Bush administration. Education beat out all other issues among those polled. www.gallup.com/poll/releases/pr010124b.asp.

**LABOR OF LOVE:** Ninety-six percent of new teachers polled say teaching is the work they love to do. Seventy-five percent say teaching is a life-long career choice. www.publicagenda.org/specials/teachers.teachers1.htm.

**INCOME:** In 1997, the richest 1 percent of Americans earned as much as the lowest-paid 35 percent. Twenty years earlier, the bottom 35 percent made twice as much as the top 1 percent. www.communitychange.org.

**CHILD CARE:** Each week, almost 5 million kids in the United States are left unsupervised after school. Of those working parents who are able to find child care, nearly half rely on family members. www.chn.org/childcare.

helped me see what I was missing in an encouraging way."

At the end of that first day, Mills had five pages of notes, which he reviewed daily until his mentor returned for a follow-up visit several weeks later. "At the end of that second visit, he couldn't believe how much progress I had made," he marvels.

### A Different Kind of Program

Kathy Reim, a veteran Peer Support Program committee member who has helped numerous colleagues, says the program is effective because there is a high level of energy and trust.

"This is much different than a building or district-level peer mentoring program," says this recently retired high school English teacher. "In those situations, you have to be politically correct and take great caution not to harm the long-term relationship you have with your colleague, because chances are you see that person frequently."

While it's valuable to be able to go down the hall and work with a fellow teacher, Reim says, this program is unique because there's more freedom to be direct and upfront.

"You don't have to beat around the bush, because the people who call for help want the help," she says. "You go in there and get to work."

Committee members undergo extensive training in psychology, personal development, listening skills, and more, so they're equipped to deal with all kinds of situations.

"I've helped very experienced teachers who are facing burnout, and very new teachers who are completely overwhelmed," Reim says. "We've even had a couple cases where clients were so burdened that they were contemplating suicide. I'd like to think our intervention helped save those lives."

Most of the time, notes Reim, clients just want someone to listen.

"We spend a lot of time asking the right questions and listening to the answers," she says. "We help them sort out and reflect on what's not working."

Sometimes, this reflection leads to deep and life-changing realizations.

"Our charge is to go in, find out how we can help the client be successful in whatever they want to be successful in, and help," says Cleary. "And that doesn't always mean we do what we can to keep them in the profession.

"Sometimes, a person just needs help realizing they are in the wrong profession, and that's okay, too."

### From Support to Mediation

Elaine Wood and Art Busch, WEA staff members who helped found the program, say it's come a long way from its early days 15 years ago. At first, members were extremely apprehensive about how the "union" could help.

"We had members who year after year experienced difficulty in their jobs. Rather than wait for them to be put on probation and defend them, we put money into a support program," says Busch. "But it's taken a decade for the idea to catch on that educators can help educators be successful."

As a result of the program's success, committee members last year added a second "Mediation/Facilitation" component, a no-cost, confidential service that provides trained mediators and facilitators to help members resolve workplace disputes or conflicts.

"We've sent eight members through a mediation training program, and they've handled three cases so far," says Denny Cleary of the program—which can intervene in disputes between colleagues, conflicts between supervisors and employees, and whole-school, department or grade-level dysfunction.

"The bottom line is that people are benefiting from our services," Cleary adds. "They become happier, more secure in their jobs, and in some cases relieved to move on. And they have a member of the profession with them every step of the way, playing a supportive role."

Dan Mills agrees. "I thought it might be beneath my dignity to make that initial call for help," he says. "But now, one year later, I'm a better teacher, a better person." ✔

*—Dina S. Gómez*

**"This program is just one professional in this town helping another professional in that town."**

—UniServ Director Phil Becker

**For more, contact Phil Becker or Elaine Wood at 360/733-3344, or Denny Cleary at 360/676-6470, ext. 5655.**

**KUDOS TO. . .**

# New Mexicans Vote in Allies

. . . In New Mexico, members of **NEA-Las Cruces** and the **Classified School Employees Council-Las Cruces** joined forces with community allies in February to elect three pro-education school board members, defeating two incumbents who supported a decision last year to scrap collective bargaining.

The campaign included radio and newspaper ads and door-to-door canvassing by some 100 Association activists. The newly elected board members have pledged to be more open and responsive to community concerns.

. . . The newly affiliated **Trenton (New Jersey) Paraprofessionals Association** has bargained a three-year plus one-year contract with raises of 4.98 percent, 5.03 percent, 5.05 percent, and 4.59 percent from 2000 to 2004. TPA has also reduced the salary guide from 25 to 13 steps, won sub pay for paras pulled to cover classes, and obtained a no-cost optical plan.

Moreover, Trenton paras have gained tuition reimbursement of up to 12 credits per year, payable prior to entering courses; a $500 bonus for members who receive a B.A.; sabbatical leave for paras at half pay; and two planning periods a week to meet with teachers.

. . . Following months of persistent lobbying by **Texas State Teachers Association** members, the Texas State Board of Education has voted by 15-0 to reject the "Transitional Permit Rule." Among other things, this proposed regulation would enable a district to hire uncertified teachers and to assign an educator to teach up to five years outside his or her area of certification—even if a certified teacher is available.

. . . When their district delayed implementation of 11 reopener agreements, members of the **Greece (New York) Support Services Employees Association** secured backing from other area unions and made plans to rally and go public. When the superintendent saw GSSEA members wearing buttons reading, "Promises Made, Promises Broken," he "asked what it would take to have all this go away," says local President Bryan McLaughlin.

"We told him, and within two days the school board had approved all 11 reopener agreements." ✔

**INDIA:** The recent earthquake in the Indian state of Gujarat destroyed an estimated 15,000 primary schools, directly affecting more than 15 million children under the age of 14. www.unicef.org/media/emerg/earthquake.htm.

**LANGUAGE BARRIER:** While three-fourths of elementary school students with limited English proficiency receive special English instruction, fewer than half of LEP secondary school students do. www.urban.org/immig/overlooked2001.html.

**HOUSING:** On average, a minimum-wage employee would have to work 87 hours each week to afford a two-bedroom apartment on 30 percent of his or her income—the federal definition of affordable housing. http://nch.ari.net/jobs.html.

**BOOK ERRORS:** A new study reveals hundreds of errors in 12 popular middle school science texts. Some 85 percent of middle school students use the books. www.psrc-online.org/curriculum/book.html.

RIGHTS WATCH

# Dress Codes Are Back in Style

## School uniforms upheld; Marilyn Manson expelled.

Rejecting student free speech claims, three recent court rulings have forcefully reaffirmed the broad authority of school officials to tell students how to dress.

■ Last January, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit became the first federal appeals court to uphold a mandatory school uniform policy for public school students.

Citing the need to reduce disciplinary problems, Louisiana's Bossier Parish School Board in 1999 adopted a requirement that all students wear uniforms to school beginning with the 1999-2000 school year. Each school was free to choose between two colors of polo or oxford shirts, and navy or khaki pants.

A group of 40 parents sued, claiming a First Amendment violation.

The appeals court agreed that a student's clothing is a form of "pure speech" that can express the student's "ethnic heritage, religious beliefs, and political and social views."

But that free speech right, the court said, is trumped by the right of educators "to decide what constitutes appropriate behavior and dress in public schools."

Why? Because school officials testified—without contradiction—that the new uniform policy actually "drastically decreased" discipline problems and "improved ... overall test scores."

"It is not the job of federal courts to determine the most effective way to educate our nation's youth," the court cautioned.

■ In a case now pending before the U.S. Supreme Court, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals last year upheld an Ohio school district's ban on wearing Marilyn Manson T-shirts in school.

The reason? The court agreed with school officials that the T-shirts could be outlawed because the controversial rock band is a bad influence on young people.

Van Wert High School senior Nicholas Boroff ignited the controversy in August 1997 when he wore a Marilyn Manson T-shirt to school. The front of the shirt depicted a three-faced Jesus and the words, "See No Truth, Hear No Truth, Speak No Truth." The back of the T-shirt carried the word "BELIEVE" with the letters "LIE" highlighted.

Citing a school rule prohibiting "clothing with offensive illustrations," the principal told Boroff that Marilyn Manson T-shirts are banned on campus and gave him the option of turning the T-shirt inside-out or going home. He opted to go home.

But for the next five days, Boroff continued to wear Marilyn Manson T-shirts, each featuring a different picture of the band's lead singer. And each day, he was sent home.

When he later sued, school officials argued that the band "promotes disruptive and demoralizing values which are inconsistent with and counter-productive to education."

And the court agreed, citing media reports that the group's lead singer, also named Marilyn Manson, "promotes drug use," "is popularly regarded as a worshipper of Satan," and sings lyrics advocating suicide, mayhem, and violence.

The court also accepted the principal's testimony that "children are genuinely influenced by the rock group and [its] propaganda."

The school has the authority to ban the group's T-shirts, the court concluded, because they "contain symbols and words that promote values that are ... patently contrary to the school's educational mission."

Boroff has filed an appeal with the Supreme Court, but the Court has not yet decided whether to hear the case.

■ And in Jefferson County, Kentucky, last year, a federal district court upheld one of the most restrictive and detailed dress codes in the country.

The policy bans shirts made of denim or spandex, those with hoods or zippers, collarless shirts, and red or blue shirts.

Also taboo are pants made of denim, nylon, or spandex; pants that are frayed, bagging, or sagging; and biker, bib, capri, cargo, and clam digger pants.

The court found that the dress code was adopted to "help reduce violent gang activity, ease tensions between students who fight over attire, aid school officials in identifying campus intruders, and promote student safety in general."

The school's goal of creating a "safe and peaceful environment," the court ruled, outweighs students' right to express themselves through their choice of clothing. ✔

**— Michael D. Simpson**
*NEA Office of General Counsel*

### Court Strikes Down School's Anti-Harassment Policy

In a decision with nationwide implications, a federal appeals court in Pennsylvania has ruled that a school district's policy banning various forms of verbal harassment violates the First Amendment.

The February 14, 2001 ruling by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals threw out a comprehensive anti-harassment policy adopted in 1999 by the State College Area School District in Pennsylvania because it was "overbroad" and sought to ban some categories of student speech that are constitutionally protected.

The policy defined harassment as "verbal or physical conduct" based on one's "race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other personal characteristics" that had the "purpose or effect" of interfering with a student's education or creating a hostile environment.

The unanimous court found several defects with the policy. First, it prohibits harassing speech that has an objectionable "purpose." It's not enough, the court said, for the speaker merely to intend to offend others. Rather, schools can ban only harassing speech that causes or is likely to cause actual harm to a student—for example, by interfering with his or her education or creating a hostile environment.

Also, prohibiting harassment based on one's "personal characteristics" goes too far because the policy defines that term to include making negative comments about one's "values." Such a ban, the court said, "strikes at the heart of moral and political discourse, the core concern of the First Amendment."

The court's decision is binding in the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

**–M.D.S.**

## THE BOTTOM LINE

**WORKFARE:** Welfare-to-work participants earn as little as $2.50 per hour with no benefits. Estimates suggest current welfare reform could drive low-wage workers' incomes down 12 percent. www.communitychange.org.

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE:** In 1998, U.S. states spent 13 percent of their total budgets on substance abuse—mostly to clean up damage. Only 4 percent of substance abuse spending was for prevention or treatment. www.casacolumbia.com.

**SPECIAL ED:** Since 1975, the federal government's contribution to the cost of education for children with special needs has dropped from 40 percent to as low as 7 percent. www.nsba.org/advocacy.issue_briefs.

**WOMEN AND COLLEGE:** A single year of college cuts the poverty rate for women heads of households by half, according to recent research. Minority women are helped most. www.centerwomenpolicy.org/press.htm.

INTERVIEW

# Meredith Brodsky Special Ed Training Becomes Standard

**A special ed instructor is on *every* teaching team at Western Oregon State University's College of Education. Here's why.**

Today, more than 6 million students with disabilities are educated in the United States—11 percent of the total public school enrollment, according to the U.S. Commission on Special Education. Since the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the mid-1970s, the categories of disabilities have increased, and the range of related issues that teachers have to deal with has grown as well.

The College of Education at Western Oregon State has developed an innovative program to prepare student teachers for classrooms in which inclusion and special education students are an integral part of the landscape. Dean Meredith Brodsky explains.

**How does Western Oregon State prepare its students for inclusive classrooms?**

We believe that every student, not just the special education student, benefits from understanding how to teach the special needs child. That's why we work in teams, and a special ed educator is always part of that team.

Skills on teaching the special needs child are taught in every class at the university because every school classroom nowadays has a special needs child. We're linking reality with training.

**How are you actually able to accomplish this?**

Teaching the special needs child is integrated throughout our curriculum. Because we have a special ed educator on every team, there's always the opportunity to step back to say here's how this instruction can be delivered to a child with a learning disability or a child with a behavioral disorder.

If students never see examples in practice, how can we expect them, as teachers, to teach in an inclusive setting?

**Do you see this trend growing in teacher education?**

I hope so. At Western Oregon State, we realized long ago that if we didn't restructure our program, our students would leave the university without the full complement of skills possible.

But that goes for understanding children of different cultures, learning styles, and ethnicities too, and that's why we've also worked hard to recruit minority teachers and strengthen our students' understanding of the diverse communities they may enter.

A comprehensive teacher training program should ensure that graduates leave here able to teach children of all abilities.

**What are your biggest concerns about inclusion and teacher education?**

As a former special education teacher and counselor, I know how significant the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is to education. It has opened the door to so many special needs children and given them access to education with their peers. It's nice to see more and more inclusive classrooms.

The problem is that many of the teachers in those classrooms need training, support, and resources, and that has to begin right at the beginning in teacher education. Too many schools of education offer an introductory course on special needs children and nothing more.

**Your program is unique. What can student teachers who have access to only one class do to prepare themselves?**

Unfortunately, their situation is all too common. It's almost a one-time-only opportunity to understand the multiple levels of special needs and the teaching challenges they create.

First, I would see if there were any way to advocate for more classes on special education for regular ed students. If that doesn't work, I would try to make sure that class is more comprehensive.

But I wouldn't want to stop there.

**What more can you suggest to a student?**

Try to supplement your education with additional training. There are lots of conferences and workshops run by organizations addressing special education. Make sure you link up with a mentor and try to make a connection with a nearby school so that you can observe how they deal with inclusion and talk to teachers about their experiences and your concerns.

Finally, there are plenty of Web sites, such as www.ideapractices.org, that are full of terrific materials.

**What if I am a student teacher about to enter the classroom?**

Find a mentor. Don't think that you have to handle any of this by yourself. There are plenty of teachers who have been in your shoes and have struggled with the same challenges and concerns. Talk to veteran teachers, contact your Association representative, or contact one of the many organizations that specialize in helping special ed children and their families.

Very often, these organizations have networks of educators trained to help colleagues understand inclusion and its implementation. NEA has a special cadre of teachers and support staff—contact them as well.

Remember that you're not alone. ✔

## RESOURCES

- The *IDEA Survival Guide*, discusses IDEA 97 and its implementation in the classroom. $5.95 from the NEA Professional Library, #2016-2-00-F.
- *Beginning Teacher K-8 Survival Kit*, a five-book collection, includes *Countdown to the First Day of School*. $37.70 from the NEA Professional Library, #0853-7-1S-F.
- *Beginning Teacher 9-12 Survival Kit*, a five-book collection, includes *Teaching and the Art of Successful Classroom Management*. $37.70 from the NEA Professional Library. #0854-5-1S-F.
- *The First-Year Teacher: Teaching with Confidence (K-8)* provides insights from classroom veterans. $16.95 from the NEA Professional Library, #2014-6-00-F.

All NEA Professional Library titles can be ordered on the Web at www.nea.org/books or by calling 800/229-4200.

Meredith Brodsky is featured in the 2001 issue of *Tomorrow's Teachers*, a publication for NEA Student members. The NEA Student Program, with more than 52,000 members on some 750 colleges and universities across the country, supports pre-professionals as they prepare to enter the classroom and gives them an opportunity to become active participants in NEA. For more information, visit the Web at www.nea.org/students.

# Reaching At-Risk Kids With Hope

*Twin organizations help educators help kids.*

**Alan Blankstein** knows what it's like to be an "at-risk" child. That's why his main goal today is helping educators understand and reach them. "If it hadn't been for one teacher—who took the time to get to know the real me and show me the value of education—I would have wound up on the streets of New York City, probably dead."

In tribute to that teacher, Blankstein started the National Educational Service (NES) in 1989, as well as the HOPE Foundation (Harnessing Optimism and Potential through Education), which is dedicated to helping educators enhance young people's school success.

Through NES, Blankstein publishes *Reaching Today's Youth*, a quarterly research journal that provides practical strategies for helping at-risk students through school and community-based efforts.

The HOPE Foundation hosts education summits and offers professional development opportunities for teachers. Its goal: to bring about change at the school and community level so all children can thrive. This reform, says Blankstein, begins with teachers.

"Some teachers feel disrespected and angered by troubled kids, and rightly so," he says. "Part of what we do is give teachers insight about the factors motivating at-risk kids and how to get to academics through the back door.

"It's important to know how to reach tough kids," says Blankstein, "because they are reachable."

**For More:** Visit www.communitiesofhope.org and www.nes.org or call 800/733-6786.

Tom Strickland

Blankstein

Gilliam

Scott Suchman

## Good News for School Papers

**Dorothy Gilliam**, *veteran columnist for* The Washington Post, *is founder and director of the Young Journalists Development Project. The model program, begun in 1997, revives high school newspapers, mentors journalism advisors, and cultivates the talents of students interested in newspaper careers.*

**Are student papers relevant in the Internet age?**
The Internet is an extension of what's put on paper. Many stories appear online, but someone still has to develop content. The Internet offers a flood of information. But newspapers, because of a long history of gathering and organizing information, consider what's important and present it in a way that people understand. Students are so excited about having a voice, and teachers report that a newspaper enhances the whole school community.

**Is having a strong school paper linked to student achievement?**
A University of Indiana study found that students who studied journalism or who were on high school papers achieved in college at higher levels than those who did not.

What you learn by putting out a newspaper is to report, write, think, and analyze, and these basic skills form the foundation for any career. You can't create a paper on your own. It's very much a team effort. Yet high school newspapers are becoming an endangered species. About a quarter of schools in America have none at all.

**Why journalism education in high school?**
It's important for young people—particularly African American and Latino youth—to have a firm hold on a newspaper career before they go to college. An American Society of Newspaper Editors study found that young people of color make their career choices earlier than other young people, and if they don't choose a journalism career by high school, they likely won't in college.

As many African American journalists are leaving the profession as entering it, and the Latino population is very poorly represented. Racial diversity in the profession is a persistent problem.

**What's available for teachers?**
If we can strengthen advisors, we can give school papers the self-sufficiency they need. Our project offers workshops, monthly seminars, on-site assistance, and virtual support through E-mail and online chats. Our staff volunteer as mentors. And the American Society of Newspaper Editors offers an annual journalism education institute for 200 teachers.

**For More:** E-mail Gilliam at gilliamd@washpost.com and visit www.highschooljournalism.org.

Larry Salzman

John Heller

# A Dramatic Revolution

**Innovator:**
**Cornelius Rish**

**Job:** Social Studies teacher, Anoka High School, Minnesota, and co-founder of "Revolution"

**Bright Idea:** When classroom lectures on history began to prompt discussions about real-life issues, Cornelius Rish had what he calls a "vision."

"Kids are craving to talk about respect, tolerance, and diversity," he says. "But most schools offer no forum to address the issues. We expect the kids to work through them alone."

Using his background in theater, Rish partnered with choreographer O'Calla Josyln to create "Revolution," a student-performing group that uses original skits, monologues, and music to address racism, sexism, and stereotyping and youth issues such as drinking and driving, domestic abuse, date rape, and HIV/AIDS.

Performances center around respect for self and others and responsibility for one's own actions.

"We travel to schools, sharing the message that regardless of one's race, class, gender, religion, or sexual orientation, we are all human beings and deserve to be treated as such," says Rish. "People from all walks of life have embraced us."

Last year the group earned the Minnesota Peace Prize—just one of many honors they've received since their inception six years ago.

The success, Rish finds, comes from the method of delivery: "Some kids respond to the acting, some to the singing. The situations are real and we don't sugarcoat the issues. I know teenagers, especially, appreciate that."

**Impact:** Rish received a note from a young lady who wrote that a show had opened her eyes to her own racist and destructive behaviors. She credits a performance as giving her a new perspective on life. Another student says she changed her mind about committing suicide.

"We've found a way to reach out and explore the issues affecting kids."

**For More:** E-mail Rish at rish@anoka.k12.mn.us or call 763/506-6355.

# Designing Our Future

**Innovator:** **Paul Brissette**

**Job:** Teacher and department chair of art design and technology education, Martha's Vineyard Regional High School, Massachusetts

**Bright Idea:** Brissette has created an "Imagineering" curriculum, that lets students design their futures by working to solve major architectural, transportation, industrial, and entertainment-design problems.

"My goal is to have students design and work on concepts that don't yet exist," says Brissette, the recipient of an Art@work grant from the NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education. "We've built models of inverted buildings, mile-high buildings, a space junk collector, a zero-gravity bicycle, and an underwater train."

Students work through conceptual challenges and design ideas—using traditional drafting boards and computer-aided design—then produce 3-D models or artistic renderings of their products.

"We discuss real issues connected with each project," he says. "When we worked on the inverted building, we discussed how to get light and air inside and how to make it water- and earthquake proof."

Brissette believes the projects show students how art, science, and technology can work together. "It's stretching their imaginations, and shows them how difficult subjects like calculus can be used in the real world."

**Next Steps:** Brissette has formed partnerships with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab and the Harvard School of Design.

"I want my students in the forefront. They'll be the ones designing our future."

**For More**: E-mail Brissette at Bris@massed.com, call 508/693-1033, or visit www.nfie.org.

# Benchmarks for Virtual Learning

**Innovator:** **Barbara Stein**

**Job:** NEA staffer working on education technology and online education policies

**Bright Idea:** Distance education—online learning—is fast becoming status quo in many schools. But what's lagging behind, says Stein, is consistent criteria for determining what makes a quality online learning experience. This is particularly true for virtual learners in high school.

"You can't apply the exact criteria you would to classroom delivery instruction to distance education," says Stein. "New issues arise when you apply a new medium."

Having issued a "Distance Education Quality Checklist" last year, NEA is now working with the Virtual High School project to develop guidelines to help policy-makers, students, and parents assess online programs. The project initially was funded by a federal Department of Education grant to provide online courses and to assesss the effectiveness of online secondary education courses. NEA and the Virtual High School project now are collaborating with a number of educational and corporate partners in developing these new substantive criteria for assessing the quality and appropriateness of courses offered online.

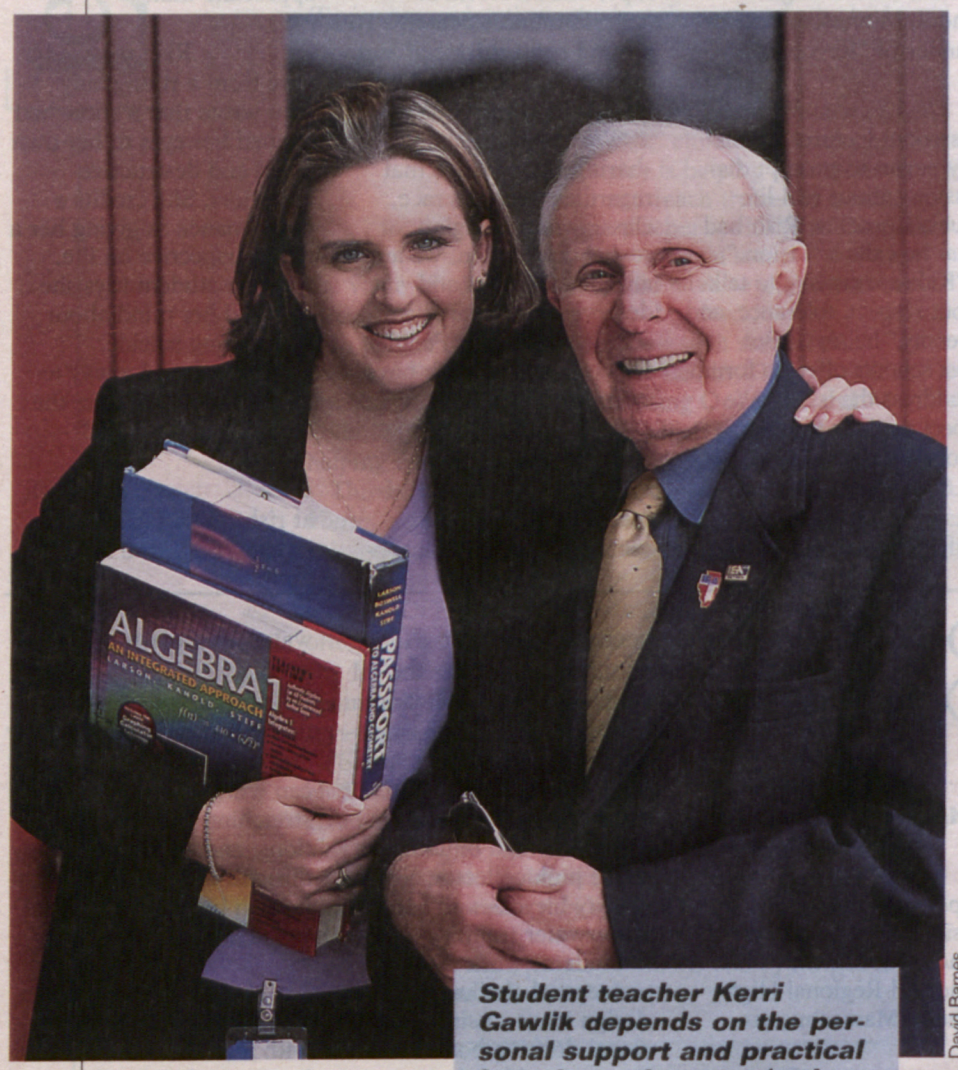
"The only criteria being applied to online courses were content criteria," says Stein. "But with new media we also have to be concerned with how that content is being delivered." NEA is working with the project to provide concrete advice on how to do just that.

Online learners in high school are different from cyber students in college, the project has found. For example, says Stein, in high school, it's particularly important to have on-site faculty—a counselor or adult content advisor whom a teacher can contact about students having problems or not showing up online. The new guidelines should be available this summer.

**For More:** E-mail Stein at bstein @nea.org or visit www.nea.org/cet/briefs/16.html

# A Shoulder To Lean On

**A new Illinois student mentorship program asks: Who better to bridge the gap between teaching theory and practice than recently retired teachers?**




David Barnes

***Student teacher Kerri Gawlik depends on the personal support and practical knowlege of mentor/retiree Keith Hauge.***

Every student teacher could use a shoulder to lean on, a personable source of information to answer questions and address concerns. Kerri Gawlik, president of the Illinois Education Association Student Program, has had that kind of great support over the last year in Keith Hauge, a 38-year classroom veteran and now an NEA-Retired member.

The two are part of a new IEA program that pairs hundreds of student teachers with mentors who are retired members.

"It's been wonderful," the 21-year-old Gawlik says of her relationship with Hauge. "Keith helps explain little things my teachers don't, so I'll be better prepared for the classroom. He gives all the free advice I can ask for."

The student/retired mentor program is the brainchild of Tina Nicpan, former state student Association chair, who saw an opportunity to tap into the vast wealth of practical knowledge of IEA's active retirees.

"I wanted—needed, really—-to supplement what my professors were teaching in the lecture hall," says Nicpan. "Then it came to me: Who better to both bridge that gap and offer students lessons in reality than recently retired teachers?"

Nicpan took her idea to IEA-Retired and received immediate support. After both groups secured grants, the students and retirees paired up in teams. Today, more than 1,300 student members work with retired mentors on a weekly basis through phone calls, E-mail, and in person. Pairs remain together until the student graduates.

Gawlick and Hauge are typical of the helpful, caring relationships that have evolved. A student at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, Gawlik hopes to become a math teacher. Hauge, who's 76 and taught drafting and wood-

**"Combining clinicals with mentoring gives me a better chance of being successful when I take over my own class."**

—Kerri Gawlik, student teacher/mentee

# Idea Exchange

### A Musical Heads Up

My K-6 music students play the familiar "Heads Up, Seven Up" with music. After they choose the person who tapped them, students must name a music symbol flash card or line and space to take their place among the "Seven Up."

I use large flash cards so children can see them from the back of the room, and I use identifying songs or quarter, half, or whole notes with young students.

The game is fun for inclusion students because you can give an easy card or play a song you are sure a child will know. That way, everyone's successful.

Students can also play this game by themselves while you are helping another student individually.

Garnet Tremble
Maysville, Kentucky

### A Yummy Lesson

To teach process writing, I send a letter home to parents asking them to help their child select a favorite homemade dish.

Parents provide the child with the recipe and, when possible, actually make it together. The student writes out the steps to making the dish in paragraph form and explains why it is a favorite. The student also includes any memories associated with the dish in the story.

We publish our recipes and stories in a book and give it to parents during the holidays.

David Grider
Louisville, Kentucky

### The Power of Reading

To help improve reading comprehension and expository writing, have students read and write their own poems and short stories, then invite parents to a classroom Reader's Theater. Challenge students to create their own word problems with an explanation and make entries in their math journals. Create bulletin boards of the class's favorite story and author, and invite an author to speak to the class.

Debora Davis
Bridgeport, Connecticut

**Works 4 Me**
nea's e-mail classroom tip of the week!

Have a great idea? You can pass along your tips to *NEA Today*'s more than 2.6 million readers in one of five ways:

- By mail: *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036
- By phone: 202/822-7201
- By fax: 202/822-7206
- By E-mail: Ideas@neatoday.nea.org
- Through the Web: www.nea.org/neatoday

working, serves as vice-chair of IEA's Retired Program.

"I've called him at late hours when I have a paper to do and no idea where I'm going with it," says Gawlik. "Or, depending on the kind of day I had, I can vent or gloat."

Gawlick also says she appreciates the opportunity to moan and complain, things she'd never do with her supervising teacher. Mentor and mentee have a high level of trust, and their conversations are held strictly between them.

Currently, Gawlik is doing the last of her "clinicals," during which she observes an eighth grade teacher in action. Combining the clinicals with the mentoring, Gawlik believes, gives her a much better chance of being successful when she takes over her own class.

For his part, Hauge says, "I give her options, two or three different things to try. I provide insights on what might work and what might not."

They talk about everything from invidualized education programs, to getting along with colleagues, to dealing with school boards. They don't talk about things Gawlik covers in her education classes, and that's just fine with her.

"What's in the book is entirely different than learning from what people have actually lived," she says.

Adds Hauge: "We go out of our way to stay hands-off the subject matter. She has professors to help her with that stuff. It's the 'side effects' of teaching that we work on. It's my job to counsel the whole person."

How are mentors paired? Living relatively close together can help. Subject matter isn't so important, but grade level may be. A mentee who definitely wants to teach elementary probably would not be paired with a mentor who taught only high school. The two also should have similar computer skills.

The program benefits both sides, Hauge notes.

"This is a form of volunteering, but better, because we can relate to it more closely," he says. "Also, it's fun. Students are so much better prepared than when I graduated in 1949. The courses these kids take are just amazing. This program helps me stay young and keeps my mind going."

Gawlik has no plans to discontinue the relationship after she finishes school.

"Keith is going to be at my graduation and my wedding, and we'll stay in touch until it's not possible anymore." ✔

*—Tom Nordby*

**For more: visit www.ieanea.org/iear/srmentor.html.**

[ DILEMMA ]

# How do you get publicity for your school's success stories?

During the course of a school year, both good and bad news happens. We must be prepared to deal with both as gracefully and intelligently as possible. Here are a few tips for dealing with media:

Don't wait for them to come to you. Call or write them and ask them to visit your school. Invite them to lunch in the cafeteria.

Think of projects you can do together. Hold a writing, drawing, or photo contest sponsored by the newspaper.

Field trips to newspaper plants or broadcast media offer a multitude of opportunities for close encounters.

Prepare a press release about a special activity or display at your school. Make sure to include the name and all contact information of the person in charge of the project, whatever it is.

Be prepared for the worst. The day everything breaks loose is the day your relationship with the media becomes more valuable than gold. When you hear the voice on the other end of the line say, "Before we print these allegations, we'd like to run them by you," you'll be grateful you took time to build bridges with the media.

*Gwen "Lisa" Kaneshiro*
Fifth grade teacher
Kamuela, Hawaii

■ When I asked Julie Martin, managing editor of the *Asheville-Citizen Times* newspaper, this question, here's what she had to say. You can increase print coverage of school news by making it easier for reporters to talk to teachers and staff. Designate a school contact person to maintain open lines of communication between school personnel and reporters.

Often reporters are "put off" by attitudes of teachers and staff who don't want to talk about a topic. Inviting reporters to a public relations staff development at the school would help break negative attitudes and help administrators and teachers feel more comfortable in talking to reporters about school news.

*Carol Fabrey*
Vocational teacher
Asheville, North Carolina

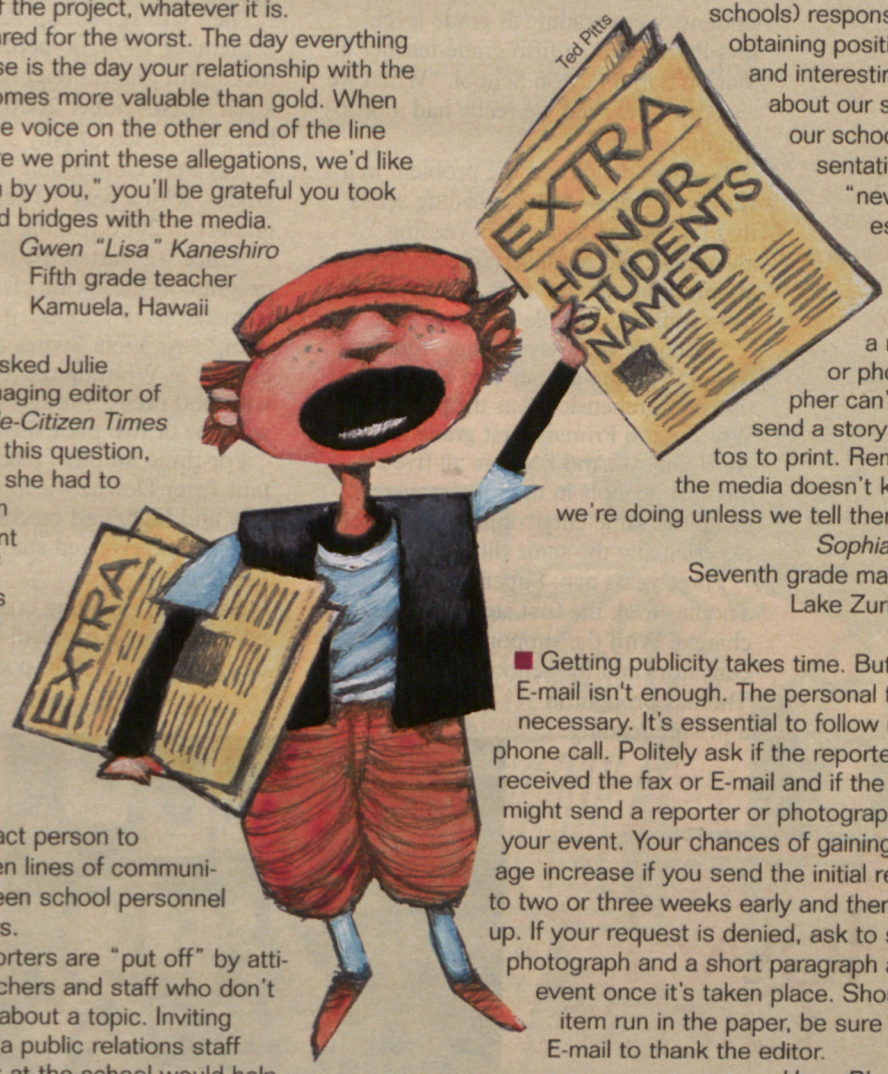
■ Getting publicity for the good news in schools is easy for us because teachers and students do the reporting in this rural county. Our media consists of one weekly newspaper and one radio station. Both have welcomed news items from our schools.

Teachers and students submit articles and photos for publication, sometimes via E-mail. High school students produce a weekly news show. Both forms of media have showcased accomplishments of individual students and teachers, as well as the activities of classes and student organizations.

The key has been for us to take the initiative and do some of the reporting work. It also helps to invite the media to attend special events.

*Mary Sue Burns*
High school chemistry and physics teacher
Dunmore, West Virginia

■ Our district has a publicity committee (one representative each from eight schools) responsible for obtaining positive items and interesting events about our schools. As our school's representative, I send "news flashes" to my list of local media. If a reporter or photographer can't attend, I send a story and photos to print. Remember, the media doesn't know what we're doing unless we tell them.




*Sophia Ramdass*
Seventh grade math teacher
Lake Zurich, Illinois

■ Getting publicity takes time. But a fax or E-mail isn't enough. The personal touch is necessary. It's essential to follow up with a phone call. Politely ask if the reporter received the fax or E-mail and if the paper might send a reporter or photographer to your event. Your chances of gaining coverage increase if you send the initial request up to two or three weeks early and then follow-up. If your request is denied, ask to send a photograph and a short paragraph about the event once it's taken place. Should the item run in the paper, be sure to call or E-mail to thank the editor.

*Hope Blecher Sass*
ESL teacher
Clark, New Jersey

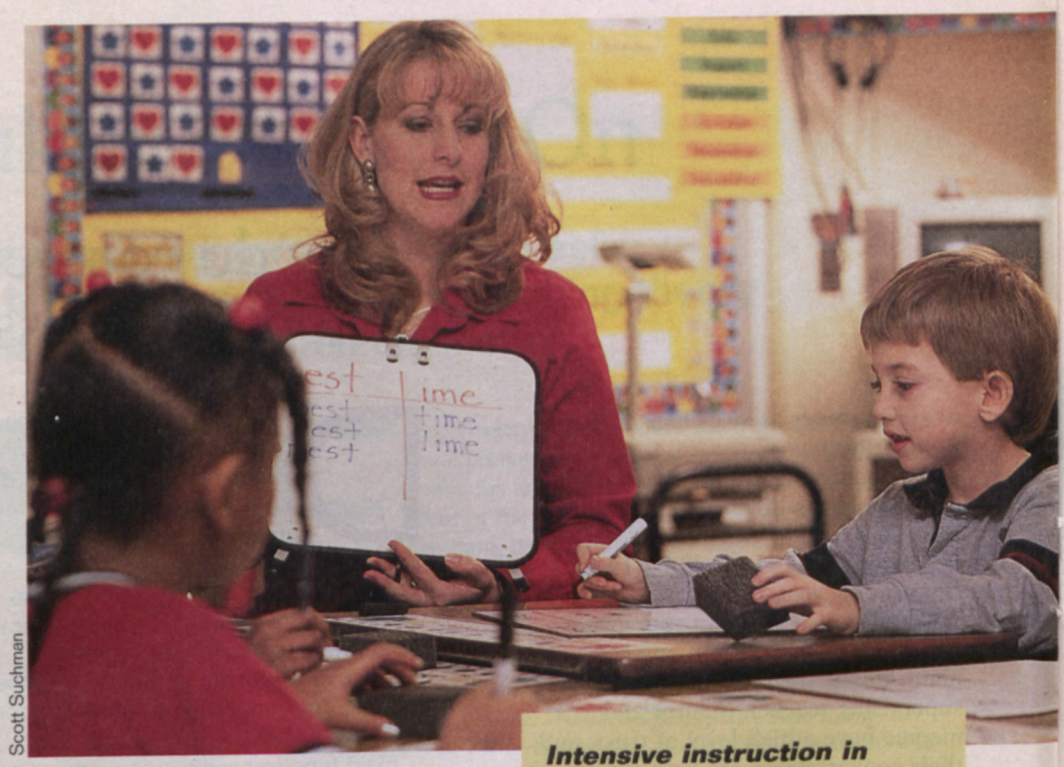
## Got an Answer?

**How do you keep students from losing ground over the summer?**

E-mail your answer to dilemma2@neatoday.nea.org. Or send by regular mail, or fax to 202/822-7206. Please include your name, city, state, and job title. Published respondents will receive an *NEA Today* mug!

# Operation Reading Rescue

## Maryland educators overhaul their total approach and rescue one district's readers.




Scott Suchman

***Intensive instruction in small groups was a key to helping struggling readers, says first grade teacher April Guard.***

Low test scores confirmed what teachers already knew—something had to be done to rescue Somerset's struggling readers. Reading scores in the close-knit Eastern Shore district had remained flat while other Maryland districts had shown improvement since 1993, the year state accountability testing began.

"Across the board, very few of our students were reading at grade level," says Patti Monk, a fifth grade teacher at Marion Sarah Peyton School. "When we tested, we realized we really had a problem in reading."

Teachers diagnosed the problem in a variety of ways—from a reading series that had gotten away from reading awareness and basal series techniques to an influx of new teachers who'd only been trained in whole language.

"Teachers were saying that students weren't reading as they had before and that comprehension was dropping," says Whittington Primary first grade teacher April Guard. And because all five elementary schools in the district were using the same curriculum, they were experiencing the same difficulties.

Three years ago, Superindent Michael Thomas took the first step to making a change. With the support of district educators and the school board, Thomas brought in a private reading consultant. Working together over the next two years, Somerset County teachers and administrators helped devise a comprehensive plan to rescue the district's young readers.

Their efforts paid off fairly quickly. In September 1999, 90 percent of the district's fifth graders read below grade level. By November 2000, that number had plummeted to only 5 percent. And scores were comparable in the lower grades, with a near 90 percent of third graders in 2000 reading right on target.

"Once we started the intervention program in the spring of 1999 we saw a tremendous development in the children," says Viola Bivins, a second grade teacher at Whittington. This school, with 360 pre-K through second graders, was one of two pilot sites.

For three months, reading consultant Peter Dewitz—a former elementary and higher ed teacher—observed classes, interviewed staff, and reviewed curriculum.

Somerset's reading crisis, he concluded, was more a problem of a poorly designed system than poor instruction.

The schools had a weak program for teaching basic phonemic awareness. Teachers were getting mixed messages about right reading methods, and they tended to teach in large groups. Kids read texts assigned by grade instead of reading ability because of publisher recommendations. And, says Dewitz, the schools had no assessment system for tracking results.

The research-based intervention plan that resulted is a hybrid of reading recovery and phonics. Change took place at every level. How staff was apportioned was addressed early on.

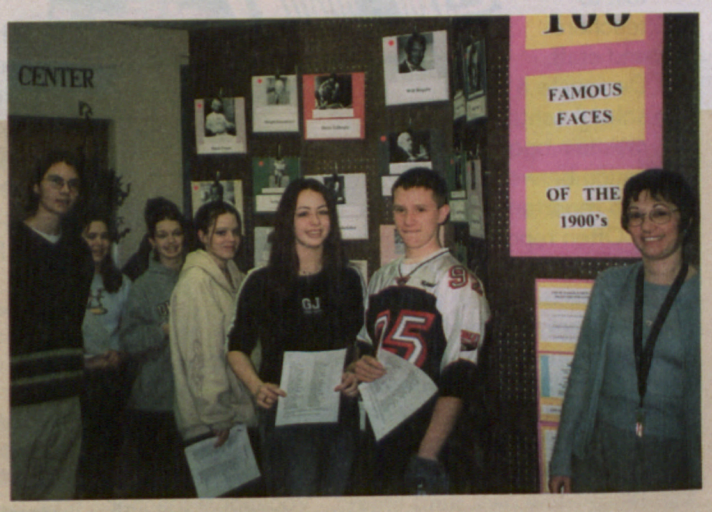
"We added a reading specialist in each elementary school," says Monk, whose school has about 250 third through fifth graders. "Before that, we didn't even have one for the entire county."

Another big change was increasing reading instruction to at least 120 minutes a day in first and second grade. In a typical class of 24 students, half

# How I Did It

**Ceil Freda**
*Middletown High School librarian*
*Middletown Township, New Jersey*

***A bulletin board match game tests viewers' skill in identifying famous faces of the century.***




What do Amelia Earhart, Adolf Hitler, Marie Curie, and Martin Luther King, Jr., all have in common? They all had their faces posted on our "100 Famous Faces from the 1900s" library display at Middletown High School South.

Library assistants and volunteers helped set up 12 six-foot art panels featuring photos of influential people from the 1900s. Due to the debate over when the new century actually began, we decided to honor individuals who lived, but were not necessarily born in the 1900s; who had an influence on the world; and who died before December 31, 1999.

We solicited suggestions of which individuals to include from faculty, students, and family members. In making the final selection, we took care to balance the photos in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, and various fields of endeavor, such as arts, sports, and politics.

Once completed, we conducted a contest to see how well people could identify our bulletin board celebrities. Each

attend a reading lab for 45 minutes while the others remain in class with a teacher, a reading specialist, and a special education teacher. Working in groups as small as three or four students, grouped by reading level, teachers focus on word attack skills, fluency, and accurary.

Meanwhile reading lab students engage in reading enrichment activities aimed at building vocabulary and listening and comprehension skills.

"We read anthology books, write, learn about authors, play phonics and word games, and do lots of hands-on activities," says Guard.

**"Teachers are excited because students are succeeding."**

—Patricia Monk, fifth grade teacher

Training was also revamped. In the summer of 1999, for two weeks, 120 teachers, administrators, and principals taught a small group of reading camp students for 90 minutes a day to apply techniques they learned in morning sessions. Even the superintendent took part. In the second year, teachers taught each other through specialized seminars. There is ongoing training by grade level once a month and periodic in-service training during and after-school.

Cautiously optimistic at first, teachers changed attitudes quickly when kids started making progress. Kids were tested four times a year, and when teachers saw their kids jump up a grade level, the excitement really began.

"It was like a light bulb came on," says Guard. "Before the program, we never got that light bulb."

Bivins will retire at the end of this school year. But she adds: "I'd want to come back just for reading intervention." ✔

*—Michelle Y. Green*

**For more: Contact Guard at 410/968-0747 or E-mail Pdewitz@cstone.net.**

**participant was given a sheet with an alphabetical listing of the 100 figures on display with a brief, written "clue" about each person.**

**The contest challenged viewers to match the correct image with the correct name. Several hundred students and adults participated, and winners received prizes donated by the Parent Faculty Association and local businesses.**

**The project was a great way to incorporate history, current events, research, and technology. But it also was a fun, informative way for Middletown High School to put its best face forward.**

***For more information, contact Ceil Freda at 732/706-6111, ext. 2146.***

[ DILEMMA ]

# How do you get students to complete their homework?

We have an active business/education partnership. To stress the importance of meeting deadlines, the business community sponsors pizza luncheons for students in grades 4 through 6 who have turned in every assignment for an entire quarter. You should see the faces of the kids who didn't make the luncheon when the pizza deliveryman comes.

At the end of the year, all fifth and sixth graders who turned in every assignment for the entire year get treated to a special breakfast emceed by a local TV personality.

*Nancy Everson*
School-to-work coordinator
Sun Prairie, Wisconsin

■ During preschool conferences we introduce "Team Day" to parents and students. At the end of every Friday, we take students who have completed their homework and maintained appropriate behavior during the week outside for 20-30 minutes. In bad weather, we use the gym or bring in board games. Usually only one teacher has to stay with students remaining inside. When students catch on that this is a privilege they control, they really work so they can go out for "Team Day." It's also wonderful to share in the accomplishments of students who stayed in before when they get to go out the next week.

*Tawana Seets*
Language arts teacher
Roxboro, North Carolina

■ As students do warm-up exercises and write the day's objectives, I check homework by walking around the room. If they haven't completed the homework at all, they sign the "I did not do my homework" list and check off the "did not do" column. If the homework is not completely finished or work is not shown, they check off the "incomplete" column. This has made students accountable and created a positive peer pressure to stay off the list. This system also gives me supporting paperwork for the homework portion of their grade. "No homeworks" have dropped from about 40 percent in the beginning of the year to about 20 percent.

*Mary Anne Pratta*
Eighth grade math teacher
Pitman, New Jersey

■ I assign two levels of homework—practice assignments (PAs) and graded assignments (4Gs). The 4G is due the day after we've gone over the PA. True to form, few do the PA, and almost all complain about the 4G, insisting it's unfair for me to actually grade homework for accuracy and procedure. Most do the 4Gs, however, and performance and grades have both improved significantly.

*Katherine Harris*
High school math teacher
Ashland, Virginia

## Got an Answer?

**How do you deal with a student who has poor hygiene?**

E-mail your answer to dilemma2@neatoday.nea.org. Or send by regular mail, or fax to 202/822-7206. Please include your name, city, state, and job title. Published respondents will receive an *NEA Today* mug!

Tedd Pitts

**"Real Teachers . . .** cheer when they hear April 1st doesn't fall on a school day!"

—Linda Ferguson, second grade teacher, Lake Charles, Louisiana

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Learning

# Jailed Mothers Read to Kids

## Iowa members help mothers in prison bond with their children through books.

Steve Pope

***Project Storybook promotes literacy in students whose mothers are in jail.***

Even though prison moms in Iowa don't get to cuddle with their children before bedtime, they do get to read them bedtime stories, thanks in part to members of the West Des Moines Education Association.

Last fall, the Association joined hands with "Project Storybook," an outreach program for the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women run by Lutheran Social Services. Mothers choose new books, record themselves reading on tape, then mail both to their children at home. Nearly 130 inmates, who must belong to a mother's support group to participate, send packages each month.

"As a mom and teacher, the project just called out to me," says Association liaison Marilyn Clauss, a second grade teacher at Westridge Elementary School. "Hearing mom's voice on tape makes kids feel secure and provides them emotional support. If we can help strengthen that critical bond between mother and child and promote literacy at the same time, it's an educator's dream come true."

The program has done wonders for more than 1,700 inmates and their children since 1998, says Joyce Binder, prison ministries coordinator for Lutheran Social Services. The children love getting tapes in the mail, and their school reading scores have improved because the tapes have motivated them to read. The books and tapes also provide mothers a way to "break the ice" when the children come to visit.

The impact at the community level is truly touching, adds Clauss. In just a few months, Association members collected 270 new and gently used children's books, 226 tapes, cash, and mailing envelopes—enough to sustain the project for three months.

"After articles appeared in the local newspaper, parents and community members showed up at our schools with handfuls of books and tears in their eyes," says Clauss. "A mother of twins donated 26 books, saying her kids couldn't even imagine not having her there to read."

The story also touched Anne McNew, a teacher more than 200 miles away. "When I read about WDMEA's efforts, I knew what I wanted to do," says the primary reading specialist at Crestwood Elementary School. In June, McNew will retire after 29 years of teaching first grade and reading. But before she does, she'll donate more than 2,000 of her classroom books to Project Storybook on behalf of the Association. ✔

*—Dina S. Gómez*

**For More: WDMEA is still accepting books and tapes. Contact Marilyn Clauss at 515/226-2694 or via E-mail at Claussm@home.wdm.k12.ia.us.**

### A Tip of the Hat in Thanks

From Abilene to Zanesville, thanks to the more than 30 million children and adults who participated in this year's Read Across America. We want to hear from you as we begin planning for 2002. Please share:

- Ideas for engaging older students
- Tips on motivating boys to read
- Strategies to encourage children of minority cultures
- Ways Read Across America helps sustain enthusiasm for reading beyond March 2.

E-mail your feedback to PChavez-Tal@nea.org or write NEA's Read Across America, 1201 Sixteenth St. NW, Washington, DC, 20036.

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## HOW TO...LINK READING AND THE VISUAL ARTS

There are natural links between reading a book and "reading" a painting or sculpture, says Barbara Kapinus of NEA's Teaching and Learning unit. Help students make the connection with questions based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress in Reading:

- ***General understanding.*** In both reading and art, a starting point is often to ask students what a book or story, painting or sculpture is about. What's the main idea? What point or effect does it make? Point out that details "add up to" an idea in art as well as in reading.
- ***Developing interpretation.*** Students make inferences about what's happening in a story as they read. Likewise, when looking at art, students can make inferences about what they think the artist is trying to communicate or express. Discuss their various points of view as a class.
- ***Reader-text connections.*** Students connect text with what they already know from experience. Ask students how they relate to a piece of artwork or writing—what they already know helps them understand it. How do their experiences resemble or differ from what the artist or writer is expressing?
- ***Critical stance.*** Have students respond to a story or art by thinking about what went into creating it. Talk about techniques such as word choice in writing or brush stroke and color choice in painting. Ask what mood they think the work suggests. Why did the artist or writer include or omit certain details?

Think aloud as you respond to a piece of art or writing. Then, encourage students to practice this technique themselves. When students learn to respond to text and art, they'll likely come away with a greater understanding and appreciation of both.

Rachelle Ornenson

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**All other bank APYs in the comparison chart are accurate as of 2/7/01, based on a $2,500 minimum opening deposit, and rates may be higher for higher balances. Source – *Informa Research Services*, 2/7/01.

†Eligible NEA family members include parents, spouse (or domestic partner) and children.

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# Sex, Peers, Media—and Family Values

## The NEA Health Information Network's 'Can We Talk?' program helps thousands of parents talk with their kids, in English or Spanish.

*"Can We Talk?" is a program that gives parents the skills and support they need to discuss healthy relationships and sexuality with their children. Its key feature: Parents talk about these tough topics in the context of their own family values. As a result, it's widely accepted in both liberal and conservative communities. It was created by the NEA Health Information Network, with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

**Why was this program created?**

Dominic Cappello, co-author of "Can We Talk?," says parents want to communicate their values to their children, but even the most conscientious parents often shy away from discussing sexual topics with their children.

Why? "Because their own parents never talked to them about sex," says Cappello. "They are scared to death of the questions they might get from their kids, and how to answer them."

All parents need, he says, is a little help.

"While a school's role in health and sex education is important, talking about sex means talking about family values, and that should be up to the parents," Cappello says. "But it's unfair to tell parents to talk to their kids and then leave them hanging. They don't know how to do it."

**How does "Can We Talk?" help?**

The program is a series of four workshops for parents—usually held at school—that helps them learn how to talk with their kids about self-esteem, peer pressure, puberty and sexuality, and the mixed messages children get from the media.

Parents receive both training and materials to help them discuss these sensitive issues with their children.

**What happens in the workshops?**

Each workshop covers a different topic, introduced by a short video. Parents are given an activity book they can use to interact with their children. They practice the exercises and discuss them with the group.

Each exercise contains cartoon drawings of family members, with empty thought and talk bubbles for each character. Parents and children complete the empty bubbles according to their own feelings and beliefs.

"This isn't a program that tells parents what to say or even how to say it," says NEA member Gloria Chapa, who coordinates the program as parent liaison at Edison Middle School in Dallas, Texas.

**When do parents need this help?**

"Once children reach about 10 years old, parents start wondering what's happening to their 'little angels,'" says Chapa.

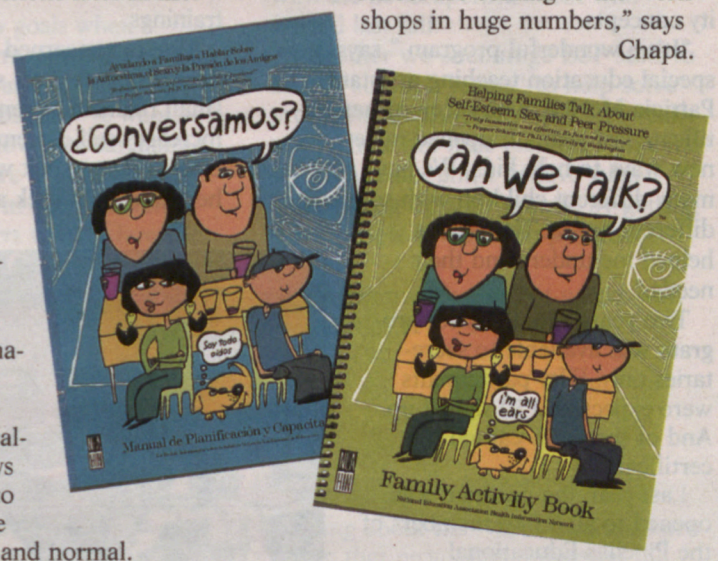
"Kids start to notice changes to their bodies and feelings, and their relationships change with their peers and their parents. For a lot of families, communicating becomes increasingly difficult."

But research shows that if the lines of communication stay open, children will develop self-confidence, good relationships with others, and the skills needed to make healthy decisions later in life.

Experts also say that young people who talk with their parents about sex are more likely to postpone sexual activity and to use protection when they do become sexually active.

"'Can We Talk?' gives parents information on what their children are going through both physically and mentally," says Chapa. "They start to realize that all of the changes are healthy and normal.

"The program," she notes, "gives parents the information they need to respond to what's happening."


¿Conversamos?
Manual de Planificación y Capacita
Helping Families Talk About Self-Esteem, Sex, and Peer Pressure
Can We Talk?
I'm all ears
Family Activity Book

**How are parents responding to "Can We Talk?"**

"It's working better than anything I've ever seen in my education career," says Chapa.

"Many parents start crying tears of joy as we share our stories in the second, third, and fourth workshops about our attempts to talk to our kids," Chapa notes. "They just can't believe how much easier it makes the effort."

"I hear from parents on a daily basis who are having incredible success," Cappello adds.

"One mother told me she and her daughter sat down after school one day to do an activity from the workbook, and they stayed up until midnight that night, just talking."

**How's the program being used?**

The "Can We Talk?" program exists in many different formats in 12 states.

■ In Syracuse, New York, the program is sponsored by a mental health organization.

■ Since "Can We Talk?" is value-neutral and has parents teaching their children, the Dallas Independent School District is using federal abstinence grant dollars to fund the program.

With nearly 60 percent of their students coming from Hispanic families, the Dallas schools were so eager to use the program in Spanish that they had a local translator write a Spanish version. This was then cut and pasted into the activity book.

But such drastic measures aren't needed any longer. NEA recently published a Spanish translation of the materials called "¿Conversamos?" And it's having an impact.

"We're finding that parents who might otherwise be intimidated by the school are coming to the workshops in huge numbers," says Chapa.

At her school, "Conversamos?" facilitators are reaching out into the community by holding workshops at apartment complexes twice per semester. That way, they reach many parents who have trouble getting to school.

■ The Washington Education Association created a nonprofit organization—Washington State Can We Talk—to partner with community-based organizations and reach out to the state's schools.

"The beauty of the program is that it can be tailored to fit individual needs," says Dennis Worsham, executive director of Washington State Can We Talk.

Education associations and parent-teacher groups can also use it to collaborate with public health departments and community organizations.

"It's a way to link schools with the community at several different levels," says Worsham. ✔

*–Dina S. Gómez*

**For More: Go to www.canwetalk.org for information about getting this program started in your community, including sample budgets. Then call the NEA's Can We Talk? staff at 202/822-7570, or E-mail info@canwetalk.org. "Can We Talk?" is the basis of the *New York Times* best-seller *Ten Talks Parents Must Have with Their Children about Sex and Character* (Hyperion).**

TEAMWORK

# Giving ESP a Chance To Grow

**Provide employees professional development opportunities, recognize and honor their work—then watch them grow.**

That's the formula one Florida support staff union has worked out with district administrators for creating an environment that builds staff morale and improves job performance.

Their venture, called the Certificate of Distinction Program, has participants complete coursework in four areas: orientation, district strategic directions, diversity training, and quality concepts.

"It's a wonderful program," says special education teaching assistant Patricia McNeil, who received her certificate last year. "It opened my eyes to new ways to help kids. We have so many different children with so many different needs. The classes helped me understand their needs."

Two years ago, the pilot program was available to secretaries only. Fifty participants were expected; 150 signed up. And of these, 36 earned the certificate.

Last year, the program was opened to all 1,040 members of the Pinellas Educational Support Personnel Association. Unit members include clerical staff, teaching assistants, special education assistants, secretaries, and other job categories.

Another 500 support staff earned their certificate in 1999-2000, and more than 2,000 have gone through orientation to begin the program.

The program has become so successful that planning has begun on Certificate of Distinction Level II. "I'll definitely do that, too," says McNeil.

"Program growth has been phenomenal," says Rik McNeill, one of four NEA UniServ directors involved in providing trainings.

"We're concerned about turnover. This program gives staff members a small financial incentive to stay. It also increases self-esteem and causes more employees to stick with employment here and even seek advancement in the district," he adds.

McNeill leads orientations and diversity trainings. "Those who complete the program become stronger advocates for kids. Going through the process gives a sense of empowerment, and they seem appreciative for the opportunity to learn. It's a great experience from a trainer's perspective to work with folks who want to improve their skills."

Several employees who have earned certificates have now shown an interest in becoming trainers and are mentoring others working on certificates.

Gloria Smith helped start the program and now serves as district-wide coordinator. You can't overestimate the importance of support staff, Smith says. "They're the basis of education."

Adds local President Carolyn Smith, "Support staff aren't in these jobs for the money. They're here because they care."

That points to the true reward of the Certificate of Distinction program. Because support staff care, when their caring is recognized and they feel valued, student learning will be enhanced. ✔

*—Tom Nordby*

Photos by Jim Stem/Silver Image

***Pinellas County ESP like Geneva Kelly took the district's certificate program to learn new job skills.***

***Bobby Coogler is one of hundreds of Pinellas County, Florida, ESP to take staff training.***

## WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

To achieve the Certificate of Distinction, participants must complete coursework in four key areas:

- Orientation
- District strategic directions
- Diversity training
- Quality concepts

When course work is complete, participants receive a $200 check before winter holidays, which they continue to receive annually. Asked if the check is important, Patricia McNeil says, "It is. Support staff doesn't get paid enough. That helped at Christmas time."

Most trainings take place on teacher in-service days, half days that students have off, evenings, or on weekends.

## Going the Extra Mile

The La Farge Educational Support Personnel bargaining team last fall received the Wisconsin Education Association Council's 2000 Paul Bierbrauer Award for excellence in bargaining.

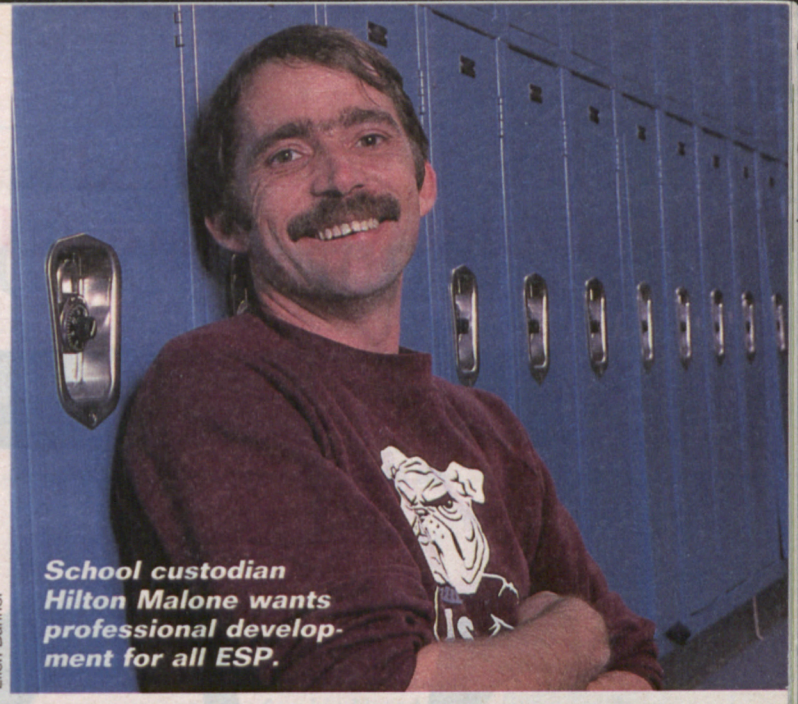
The team displayed "an intense commitment" and collegiality in reaching settlement on a three-year contract that runs through 2002, according to Coulee Region United Educators Director **Gerald Roethel**. This was the initial contract for the union, which includes custodians, paraeducators, and cooks.

The four-member bargaining team included **Lynda Fish, Audrey Clift, John Madden Jr.,** and **Marge Strait**.

Roethel wrote in his nomination of the team for the award: "They admirably represented the diverse

TEAM PLAYER

# Working Together, Solving Problems


Ellen Banner

*School custodian Hilton Malone wants professional development for all ESP.*

**Name: Hilton Malone**

**Job Title:** Custodian at Shelton Middle School, Shelton, Washington; president, Shelton Education Support Personnel Association.

**How we're organized:** Many teachers, not all, have gained access and time for high-quality professional development activities.

Opportunities have not been so readily available to support personnel. That's changing in the Washington Education Association's Chinook UniServ area here in the western part of Washington State. The UniServ office serves 44 locals, 12 of which are support personnel locals.

Many of the support locals have formed joint committees with administrators to discuss professional development.

My local began such talks last year. The bargaining unit consists of custodial and maintenance personnel, educational assistants, and food service employees.

Our members wanted help on issues such as stress reduction, crisis intervention with students, and training on various types of equipment.

**Offering opportunities:** Sometimes people ask: How do adult learning opportunities enhance support members' critical work as part of the team delivering all phases of education to children?

Well, to continue to improve the services we provide, our members must receive access to quality professional development opportunities. It's highly beneficial to us personally and to our students.

By creating a more efficient and more pleasant work environment, we make things better for everyone—including students. Not that it's bad now. We're just always looking for ways to improve.

**Setting goals:** My goals when I became local president were to get membership numbers up and get ESP involved in the community. We want people in town to know that bargaining unit members are here to support our children and to help in our community.

Sometimes members wonder how the union can help—"What does the union do for me?" So I sometimes respond by asking, "What do you do for your union?" The union does training programs, and we get to network and meet people in the same boat we're in. They can identify with what we're going through.

As local president, I meet monthly with the new superintendent who started last fall.

Together we encourage ESP staff to be on "solution teams" to help solve problems identified by staff. It's really neat. There are nine members on each solution team, and I believe such teams bring up staff morale by getting more people involved in problem solving.

Our teamwork concept works well in Shelton! ✔

## RESOURCES

**What's your job?**
No matter what your job, there's a Web site, or two, or three for you. Sites may also lead you to other fun and helpful information that can make your job easier as a member of the education team.

**Bus drivers:** www.nhtsa.dot.gov is the address of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and there's a link right on the home page for drivers.

**Cooks:** www.asfsa.org is put together by the American School Food Service Association and will help out those who feed kids in schools.

**Paraprofessionals:** www.nrcpara.org features a wide array of information from the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals.

**Something for everyone:** www.ed.gov is the site of the U.S. Department of Education. It's huge.

**Cough, Wheeze . . .**
Concerned about your school building? Get a copy of the *Healthy School Handbook: Conquering the Sick Building Syndrome and Other Environmental Hazards In and Around Your School.* Environmental scientists, engineers, and educators wrote this volume that's full of practical advice on dealing with school building problems. Call the NEA Professional Library at 800/229-4200.

**Insurance nice to have**
Have your ever heard of EEL? We're talking about the NEA's insurance program that protects members on the job—not the fish.

If you find yourself with work-related legal issues, the Educators Employment Liability Program from NEA might just be one of the most important aspects of your NEA membership. Eligible members receive protection from personal financial liability for most incidents arising out of their educational employment activities or duties.

The program is administered through your NEA state affiliate Association. For more information, contact your local Education Associaton UniServ Office or your State Education Association's EEL Coordinator.

**interests of all the classifications and new and experienced employees in obtaining an excellent initial collective bargaining agreement . . . During bargaining, the team presented itself in a calm and decisive manner.**

**"All team members live in the local community and are well regarded by local citizens. These attributes certainly helped the bargaining team achieve a successful contract."**

**Fifteen ESP locals received technology grants from NEA last year. Here's what one local decided to do with its grant money.**

**The Maple Organization Support Team (MOST), which represents all ESP in a western suburban Cleveland district, spent its money on a computer, printer, and training media for leaders.**

**The local has no office space. By converting its paper records to electronic ones and providing training to interested members, the local expects to improve recordkeeping, communications, and member involvement, explains local President Debbie Salkowski.**

**NEA will announce the deadline for the next round of grants in the near future, so start casting about for ideas that connect technology with student achievement.**

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| Bank One, Illinois | 4.45% APY** (12-month term) |
| Citibank, New York | 4.50% APY** (12-month term) |

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# Simple arithmetic

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**All other bank APYs shown in the comparison chart are valid as of 2/12/01, based on a $2,500 minimum opening deposit and a term of 12 months. Source – *Informa Research Services*, 2/12/01.

†Eligible NEA family members include parents, spouse (or domestic partner) and children.

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# Cutting Across the Curriculum Online

***Wisconsin teacher Sue Glass uses her class Web site for all sorts of class activities.***

**World on Our Doorstep**

I found that the most motivating tool that I have used in all of my years of teaching has been our class Web site. I developed the site to provide a doorway for my second and third graders to communicate with the world.

I wanted them to be able to easily access information from quality sites and also feel that they were capable of teaching others.

The benefits have been so much greater than I could have ever expected. When we are studying any particular theme, everyone knows that they will be expected to participate in the "web project."

We have had various other enriching experiences because of our site. We have received E-mail from all over, been interviewed by the *Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel* and even a local TV station. The children feel like experts not only in the academic areas that they have researched, but also in the area of technology. When one of our state senators came to visit and asked questions, my students felt like what they had to say was of value.

You can find our site at www.bdsd.k12.wi.us/dean/buddynew/buddy.htm.

*Sue Glass*
Dean School
Cedarburg, Wisconsin

**Putting Technology To Work**

Students are benefiting from the Web pages I have researched and created as a remedial reading instructor in the fourth grade. The students, in turn, apply the data they collect from my Web site and create their own!

Teachers have requested specific data and resources. Through the format of a teacher-created Web site, all teachers in the county at a grade/subject area have access to data of interest. Equally important, collaboration within a school, county, and state represent an unlimited opportunity for professional growth.

Listed below are the Web sites for examples of cross-curriculum application integrating technology, Internet, and curriculum across the board in all grade levels:

www.geocities.com/jwheelershes/Heathsweather.html

www.geocities.com/jwheelershes/Yuranslightningbolt.html

www.geocities.com/jwheelershes/Februarynewsletter.html

*Joyce Wheeler*
Sand Hill Elementary School
Carrolton, Georgia

**Oldie but Goody**

I go from school to school, reading the children's books that I have written and illustrated on the computer, using computer graphics programs as well as the basic paintbrush program of Windows, and demonstrating to students and teachers how they can do the same thing.

I bring my old but upgraded 386 (its insides are of Pentium II stuff) with me, so that I can show that even an old computer can be rehabbed.

My focus is on the rural and the at-risk kids and the teachers that have little or no access to the few big Nevada cities.

I hook into their monitors to demonstrate how writing and illustrating can be done and saved using the least amount of space.

My aim is to get schools to see the option of e-books instead of textbooks. It is also to get kids to write, draw, and publish online.

*Georgia Hedrick*
Northern Nevada Writing Project
Reno, Nevada

## TALK TO US

**Have a nifty classroom tip or lesson plan that uses technology? E-mail a description (under 200 words, please!) to wired-classroom@list.nea.org.**

**Is there a Web site, CD-ROM, or piece of software you can't live without? E-mail your favorites—and why you love them—to myfavoritetech@list.nea.org.**

**Or send your responses by regular mail to *NEA Today*, or by Fax to 202/822-7206, or through the Web at www.nea.org/cet.**

**Those published here will receive a sparkling *NEA Today* mug!**

## My favorite Web site

**I created an online discussion page for seniors to explore Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* and Adam Hochschild's *King Leopold's Ghost*, at http://acrophobic.homestead.com/hod.html.**

Diana Kimmel
Ayden-Grifton High School
Greenville, North Carolina

## Bytes for Beginners

**How can I organize all the bookmarks I've created with Netscape Communicator? How can I get my favorite bookmarks to appear in Netscape's toolbar?**

On a Windows machine, follow these steps to organize by topic:

1. In Netscape, pull down the "Bookmarks" menu to "Edit Bookmarks," click, and release.
2. Pull down the file menu and release on "New Folder." This will create a folder in which to organize Web sites with a similar scope and focus. The new folder will be created in the place you select.
3. Name the folder by typing the topic in the narrow white space beside "Name" and click on "OK."
4. When you get to a page you want to bookmark, click on "Bookmarks," slide the menu bar to the right to "File Bookmarks," and click and release on the folder in which you want to place it. It will now be in that folder, rather than a long list.

HINT: You can save information about a particular bookmark such as a username or other information within the bookmark itself. To do this:

1. Follow step #1 above.
2. Highlight bookmark for which you have information you want to save.
3. From the "Edit" menu select "Bookmark Properties."
4. Type your information in the "Description" box then click "OK."

For the second part of your question, follow step #1 from above then:

1. Locate the folder named "Personal Toolbar Folder."
2. Click on and drag any existing bookmark that you want to appear on the Communicator toolbar into that folder.

You can do the same with Internet Explorer.

# Beyond Broccoli: Vegetarianism in School

**In or out of school, balancing the nutritional needs and wants of today's kids is a difficult job. But what about those students who opt for a vegetarian lifestyle? Rena Large of the NEA Health Information Network talked with nutrition advisors at The Vegetarian Resource Group to learn more about children who choose vegetarianism and their experiences at school.**

### Is vegetarianism common among school children?

Recent polls show that six percent of 6–17-year-olds in the United States don't eat red meat. This figure includes the two percent of those under 18 who are completely vegetarian. Often people think teenagers are more likely to be vegetarians, but preadolescents are just as likely to choose vegetarian diets. While some children and teenagers are growing up in vegetarian families, others choose vegetarianism on their own, motivated by interest in protecting the environment and animal rights-welfare issues.

### Is a vegetarian diet healthy for children?

The American Dietetic Association in 1997 recognized a positive link between vegetarian diets and reduced risk for several chronic degenerative diseases and conditions, including obesity, coronary artery disease, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, and some types of cancer. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also recognizes the value of a vegetarian diet. In fact, the latest version of the Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children Ages 2–6 includes soy and tofu products as alternatives in the dairy and meat food groups. Vegetarian meals—which include more fruits, vegetables, and fiber—tend to be closer to USDA dietary guidelines than most school lunches, which according to USDA studies, tend to be too high in fat (about 34%) and sodium and too low in fiber.

### Do teens fare well with a vegetarian diet?

North American teens have little problem with vegetarian and vegan diets, according to The Vegetarian Resource Group. The problem is letting junk food push fruits, vegetables, and other nutritious foods out of the diet. A diet that is deficient in needed nutrients is a problem with all kids, not just vegetarian kids. And vegetarian diets, like all diets, need to be planned appropriately to be nutritionally adequate.

It's important for teens to get enough calories to support growth. They need to be aware of good sources of iron and zinc and incorporate foods rich in these minerals into their diets. Vegans, those who eat no meat, dairy, or egg products, may need to supplement their diets with vitamin $B_{12}$ and good sources of calcium. It's also a good idea for teens—or anyone interested in switching to or maintaining vegetarian lifestyle—to consult a registered dietitian for individual assessment and counseling.

### Do school lunch programs offer vegetarian meals?

Most schools usually do offer some foods that qualify as vegetarian, such as pizza or salad bars, but there often aren't enough options. The reasons why more schools don't offer this are complex and involve a variety of limitations. Schools may also feel they lack the administrative or parental support to adopt vegetarian menus.

The USDA is trying to help the National School Lunch Program reflect the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans by providing school lunch recipes that are lower in fat and sodium. The latest USDA recipe book for school lunches even includes vegetarian and vegan recipes.

Tammy Smith

### Can students maintain a vegetarian diet at school?

Kids often find it hard to follow a vegetarian diet at school due to limited options and pressure from peers. Reed Mangels, Ph.D, R.D., a nutrition advisor for The Vegetarian Resource Group and mother of two school-aged children, says she looks at the school menu in advance and sometimes arranges to eat lunch with her children to find out what other kids are eating. Parents can help by preparing lunches for their kids that look like the school lunch options, for example pizza with soy cheese and vegetables and other soy- and tofu-based foods like soy yogurt and "phony" bologna. And students, she says, can start a vegetarian group in their school to support each other and raise awareness.

Parents and students can support school cafeteria staff by sharing their ideas for vegetarian menus with the food service manager. But it's important to be realistic and understand that schools have certain limitations in what they can serve. If a school knows they have an interested, supportive audience and that parents and students are willing to participate in the process of identifying alternatives, the staff will feel more confident in trying to serve vegetarian options.

### How can teachers include vegetarianism in class lesson plans on nutrition?

From a practical standpoint, teachers who use the USDA Food Guide Pyramid are already promoting low-fat, high-fiber foods such as fruits, vegetables, and grains that are integral to vegetarian diets. And research shows children will eat more of these foods if they first learn about them through hands-on experience in the classroom. The Pyramid doesn't work for vegans who don't eat dairy products, however.

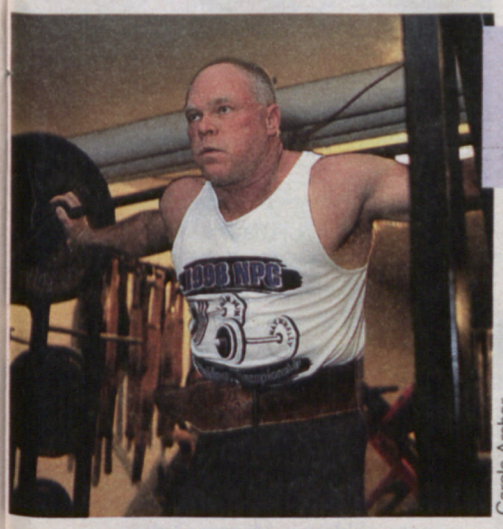
Since the most recent USDA Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children Ages 2–6 recognizes soy and tofu as alternatives in the milk and meat food groups, it's getting easier to incorporate vegetarianism into classroom nutrition lessons. If parents are concerned that the classroom lessons are not meeting the needs of their child, however, they should talk to teachers to let them know they have a vegetarian student, and even help them learn more and find resources about vegetarian foods to share with other students. ✔

## RESOURCES

- **The Vegetarian Resource Group produces *The Vegetarian Journal*, *Healthy Fast Food for Pre-Schoolers*, and other resources for educators and families. Visit www.vrg.org, E-mail vrg@vrg.org, or call 410/366-8343.**
- **The Food Allergy Network offers recipes and handouts on foods that contain possible allergens. Visit www.foodallergy.org or write 10400 Eaton Place, Suite 107, Fairfax, VA 22030-2208.**
- **To help children learn about healthy eating and for tips on using the USDA's Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children, visit www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/publications/kidspyramid.htm.**
- **The American Dietetic Association offers information on vegetarian diets and a food guide pyramid for vegetarian meal planning. Visit www.vrg.org/nutrition/adapaper.htm.**

# A Death-Defying Act

**How's this for a reason to get active: It can save your life! After suffering from a heart attack and undergoing double bypass surgery, doctors tell teacher and bodybuilder Ron Smith: 'Being fit saved your life.'**



Carole Archer

***Years of healthy habits helped Ron Smith survive a heart attack that went undiagnosed for three weeks.***

He's the picture of health: a former body builder who eats right, exercises daily, and tries his hardest to get enough sleep. But last year, at age 46, Oregon teacher Ron Smith suffered a serious heart attack and underwent double bypass surgery.

"I shouldn't be alive right now," he says. "The doctors tell me the only reason I'm still breathing today is because of the years I spent exercising my body and my heart."

Smith, an agricultural science and technology teacher at Nestucca High School in Cloverdale, began lifting weights 20 years ago when diagnosed with diabetes.

"The doctors gave me three options: take medication, seriously cut back on my eating, or start exercising," he says. "I don't like medicines and there's no way I was going to starve myself, so I threw myself into lifting weights."

For the next eight years, Smith won numerous bodybuilding competitions and even owned a gym. While coaching other bodybuilders, he discovered his love for teaching. Smith decided to complete his master's degree, then took a job at Nestucca High. But he soon realized he had nowhere to lift weights.

"So I used my role as teacher, and my engineering experience, to motivate students to build the best high school gym in Oregon," he says.

Smith and his students designed and fabricated all of the machines, dumbbells, and benches in the school's weight room by hand. The gym, says Smith, is good enough for competitive bodybuilders—including his wife, who placed fourth in the nation two years ago.

It was during an early morning training session last year that Smith felt pains in his chest and fell to the ground. He was rushed to the hospital, but doctors, not knowing what was wrong, sent him home hours later.

For three weeks, Smith continued to follow his daily exercise schedule—but his chest still hurt. Finally, at the urging of his wife, he drove two hours to Portland for a check-up with a cardiologist.

"They wanted to admit me right there for bypass surgery," he says. "They were floored that I was functioning like I was."

After surgery, doctors told him just how lucky he was. "Of the three major arteries that go into the heart, I had 100 percent blockage in one, and 95 percent blockage in another," he says. "I learned that all those years of lifting weights and keeping in shape kept me alive."

Within four weeks, Smith was back to judging bodybuilding competitions. Within six weeks, he was back to a modified version of his exercise routine. While the heart attack may not have been preventable because of the diabetes, says Smith, what was preventable was dying.

"Everyone has their own ideas of what being in shape means," he says. "I just urge people to move their bodies so their blood can pump through their hearts. You never know when a strong heart might save your life." ✔

*—Dina S. Gómez*

## Three Tips for Success

As a former personal trainer and bodybuilding champion, Ron Smith knows what it takes to get—and stay—in shape:

- **Consistency:** Choose an exercise routine that fits with your schedule, and stick to it. "Don't say you'll work out five days and then only work out three," says Smith. "Start with three days, get on a schedule, and then grow your routine from there."
- **Intensity:** Exercising means challenging yourself. "Don't go to the gym and use the lightest weights," he says. "If you're going to invest the time, you should at least break a sweat."
- **Commitment:** Good nutrition and adequate sleep are as important as exercise. "Eighty percent of being fit has to do with what you put in your body," he says. "And you have to commit to six to eight hours of sleep per night so your body can recover from the exercise." ✔

## Quick Tip

**Sameta Rush**

**April is tax time and a good month to start an exercise investment plan:**

- **First, consult your physician for guidance or limitations.**
- **Invest 10 minutes of exercise three times a week.**
- **Diversify your portfolio: Try brisk walks in the halls. Walk the stairs several times. Jog between the lines in the gym. Kick a soccer ball for 10 minutes. Try water aerobics for joint pain. Improve upper body strength by holding soup cans while walking.**
- **Remember that talking about your day is a method of stress reduction, and sharing with someone while exercising is a double bonus.**

**Sameta Rush**, a competitive cyclist and triathlete, teaches fourth grade and video production at Strawberry Park Elementary School in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

## NEA HIN

*From the* **NEA Health Information Network**

### ■ Prevenir el Embarazo Juvenil

**The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, in collaboration with the Bravo Group, one of the nation's leading Hispanic communication firms, has created Consejos a Los Padres para Prevenir el Embarazo Juvenil. This publication offers practical tips to help Hispanic parents, educators, and other adults address sex, love, and relationships with adolescents. For information, call 202/478-8566 or visit www.teenpregnancy.org.**

### ■ Cancer Survivors

**NEA's Health Information Network is collecting pictures of NEA member cancer survivors for an exhibit at the July 2001 NEA Representative Assembly in Los Angeles. Pictures submitted previously will not be used again. NEA HIN also will launch an NEA Cancer Survivor's Caucus this summer. Visit our exhibit booth at the RA to have your picture taken and instantly added to our exhibit. For more, visit www.neahin.org or call 800/718-8387.**

### ■ Quit Smoking

**To get a free copy of the Public Health Service consumer brochure "You Can Quit Smoking" in English or Spanish, call 800/358-9295.**

### ■ School Health

**The American Cancer Society has created three comprehensive guidebooks that provide practical guidance for improving school health. *Awareness Campaigns* (#2030.02) describes planning and implementing a targeted awareness campaign. *A Guide to the Role of School Health* (#2030.01) offers strategies to advocate for a community school health coordinator, and *A Guide to School Health Councils* (#0201) encourages involvement in school health councils and committees guiding school policy and programs. To order, call 800/ACS-2345 and refer to code numbers.**

# An American Hero

**Patrick O'Loughlen is a walking history lesson, a living symbol of America.**

"Let's just say students were eager to hear my stories," says 71-year-old NEA-Retired member **Patrick O'Loughlen**, reflecting on his 30 years as a social studies teacher in Oregon. "It's always something to have first-person accounts."

Even today, as a substitute teacher at Booth Memorial Middle School in Boise, Idaho—a public high school for pregnant and new teen moms—O'Loughlen is using his past to connect with teens.

As a Marine in the Korean War, O'Loughlen's face became ingrained in America's photographic history when *Life* magazine photographer Douglas Duncan captured him and two other service men on film (he's the middle soldier in the photo below).

The famous shot was taken before the soldiers were trapped by Chinese forces at the Chosin Reservoir. O'Loughlen was one of the few "Chosin Frozen" to survive.

"It's strange being in such a well-known photograph," O'Loughlen reflects. "But it's certainly a powerful image."

Pam Benham

U.S. Army

After recovering in naval hospitals for close to a year, O'Loughlen received a medical discharge from the war in 1952. Three years later he became a prison guard at Alcatraz.

"My students always wanted to hear stories about Alcatraz life," O'Loughlen says with a laugh. "But it was actually a very boring job. I was there before the big escape in 1961, so my time was mainly spent walking tiers and counting prisoners."

O'Loughlen left the prison service in 1958, at his wife's urging. "She convinced me to try being a teacher," he says.

"It's pretty easy to get sour in life when you work in a prison," O'Loughlen observes, "but it's the complete opposite when you work with kids."

Since his retirement from Oregon's Bethel School District in 1993, O'Loughlen has mentored first-time juvenile offenders, taught youth group and Sunday school classes, and worked with the students at Boone.

He's also helped teachers across Idaho hook up with war veterans to talk to their students. Since he's the department commander of Idaho's Military Order of the Purple Hearts and president of Kiwanis, that hasn't been hard for him to do.

O'Loughlen's history and devotion have earned him big praise.

"He makes me proud to be alive, and proud to be a teacher," says Marian Pritchett, an educator at Boone. "He's a phenomenal man, one of those people you are better off for knowing."

Pritchett adds: "The students love him, the teachers love him, and the community loves him—a real American hero." ✔

## On the Trail of Jesse James

**Bev McCulloch** brings the era of outlaws alive for students who come to visit her farm 40 miles north of Kansas City.

That's Jesse James territory.

James was born in nearby Kearney, Missouri, and his father was a friend of the local preacher. McCulloch's site sits near a trail that James rode in the 1870s.

In the 1930s, McCulloch's newly married mother-in-law answered a knock at the door and found an old man. He asked if he could come in and see the house. As a small boy, he said, he'd held the reins of James's horse while his mother fixed the famous bank robber a meal.

Today, the farm focuses on life as it was lived in James's time. Five hundred students have benefited from the learning activities offered at the site—basket weaving, corn and coffee grinding, candle dipping, and butter churning.

McCulloch, who teaches gifted students in Maysville, says the kids seem to enjoy dipping candles the most, with the liquid wax coming from a kettle on an open pit fire. They also like getting in the covered wagon to eat their sack lunches and swinging from a knotted rope swing on a huge old oak.

The two-story cabin, a solid oak and walnut structure, has been there since even before James was born. For years, it was sheltered inside a barn across the road from its present location. When the owners decided to tear down both buildings, McCulloch and her husband purchased the cabin and moved it to their property.

Now, they host up to 30 students at a time on weekends or during the summers.

"So much time and effort is spent getting kids online or involving them in technology," says McCulloch, a longtime history enthusiast and a descendant of the McCoys of West Virginia.

"Here, we have a hands-on experience, instead of just printing something out on a computer," she notes.

For more information on how students can experience life as it was lived more than 100 years ago, call 816/370-2532. ✔

## Echoes of the Past Reverberate in the Present

**Joanne Heinz** may be Academy Award material. At the end of one of the historical enactments she stages with her historian husband, one sad youngster approached her and said, "I'm sorry you lost your daughter."

But in creating "Echoes of the Past," Heinz has her eye more on educating children than box office receipts.

"Children need to know their past, in order to know what their future might be," says Heinz, a 27-year teaching veteran in Newton, Washington. "Our presentations help them learn both visually and interactively."

The repertoire includes three historical reenactments—Oregon Fever, Men and Women in the Frontier Army, and A Stitch in Time.

All involve period costumes and veer far afield from dry history lectures. Scenes with 19th-century women's and men's "underpinnings"—underwear—generally draw gales of laughter from all ages.

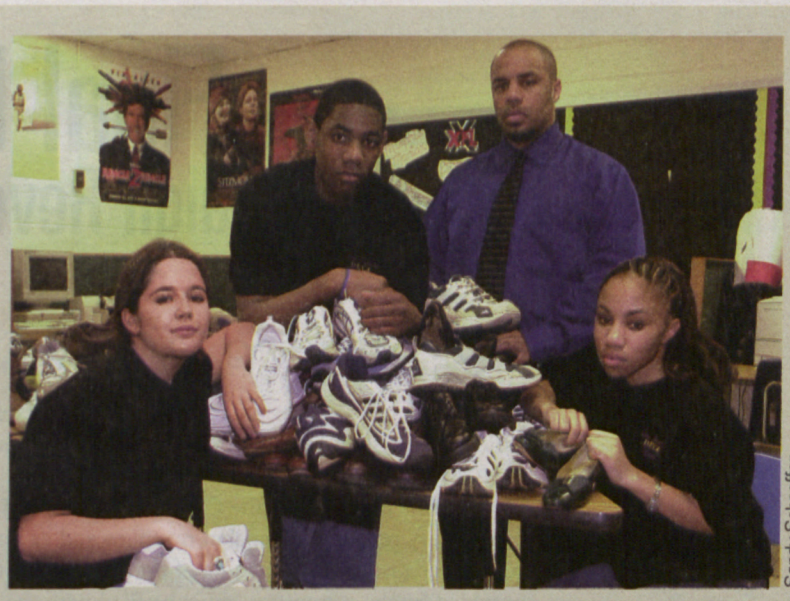
But beneath the entertainment lie real history lessons. The Oregon Fever presentation relates the devastating effect cholera had in the area. Cholera was a common killer of those in a hurry to get out west, resulting from people using the same sections of river for all cleansing and drinking purposes. On sections of the Oregon Trail, 10 graves per mile lie beneath the sod.

Heinz met her husband and acting partner as a volunteer on a National Park Service archeological dig in 1991, where country western singer Hank Williams Jr. was paying $40,000 to learn more about the Big Hole Nez Perce battlefield located near his ranch in southwest Montana.

The pair met again at another archeological site in 1994 and married in 1999 at a time-period wedding at their home in Washington State.

Heinz receives 10 days of professional leave per year from her district to make presentations. Their "Echoes of the Past" circuit covers the Spokane, Washington-Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, vicinity and reaches as far afield as Billings, Montana, and Buffalo, Wyoming.

For more on the presentations, call 509/447-0656. ✔



Sandy Schaeffer

## The Perfect Fit

**Melvin Morgan** and his marketing students at Lake Braddock High School in Burke, Virginia, are on a mission to collect 3,792 pairs of shoes—one pair for every child who was killed by a handgun in the year 2000.

"It started as a public relations project for class, but I think it's gotten a lot more personal than that as the months have gone by," says Morgan. "Children dying from handguns is an issue most kids care deeply about."

Morgan and his students will use the shoes to create a visual display that will bring attention to the number of children slain by gun violence.

"It's going to be a powerful image, seeing all of those empty shoes," he says. "And it's a wonderful opportunity for the students to get involved with the community."

Last year, the class's community involvement project "Lend a Hand: Disaster Relief Awareness" earned first-place in a national public relations and marketing competition.

"These are the same competitions I was entering as a high school marketing student 11 years ago," Morgan says with pride.

Morgan also gets to center his lessons around sporting events and is currently helping students create, market, and sell advertising for an interactive school sports Web site.

"I love being a teacher," he says. "Where else could I share my love of community, sports, and marketing?" ✔

## From Statehouse to Schoolhouse

An unexpected event two years ago convinced **John Stasik**, then a state legislator in Massachusetts on leave from teaching, to go back into the classroom: He had a heart attack.

"It made me think, 'Your life is not necessarily going to last as long as you thought it would. How do you want to spend the rest of it?'" Stasik recalls.

"And I decided I would rather spend it teaching than figuring out the political angles of the Statehouse."

Stasik first ran for state representative in 1996, with the intention of promoting smart growth and better transportation policies. But the independence and initiative that made him a successful teacher didn't work so well in the legislature, where the leadership wanted obedience.

"My progressive inclinations were not in line with the leadership of the House," Stasik explains.

Most of his efforts on issues big and small were blocked. So rather than run again at the end of his second term, Stasik walked out of the Statehouse and went back to helping children understand the world around them.

"Today, my kids were heating water with ice in it," Stasik notes. "They thought they must be doing it wrong because the thermometer said the temperature wasn't going up. I suggested that they continue, and graph the data. When all the ice was melted, the temperature started rising. So they had to think—where was the heat going when the temperature wasn't rising?

"Being there at a moment of revelation is truly exciting," says Stasik. "That's what I get a kick out of."

Michael Quan

Stasik enjoys fulfilling requests for his lesson plans from other educators. As for his friends in the legislature, Stasik says, "I'm glad they're carrying on the good fight. But I don't regret going back one iota. I had a little trepidation at first. But within an hour, four years of absence melted away. I love it." ✔

# Final Reports of Campaign Revenues and Expenses

## NEA Standing Rule 10.E provides as follows:

**Campaign Expenses.** No portion of dues money collected at the local, regional, state, or national level shall be used to promote the candidacy of any individual for an NEA office.

Using forms provided by the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules, each candidate shall file a preliminary report of campaign revenues and expenses, including projected revenues and expenses, with the committee prior to the opening of nominations at the Representative Assembly. A final report, on the forms provided by the committee, must be filed with the committee no later than thirty (30) days following certification of the election results. The committee shall report to the Representative Assembly, prior to any nominations or elections, whether any candidate has in any manner violated the election rules and regulations. The final report of campaign revenues and expenditures shall be printed in an appropriate NEA publication for inspection by any member.

The following reports were filed in a timely manner and are printed pursuant to Rule 10.E.

Candidates are listed below by office and by alphabetical order within each office.

## Candidate for Secretary-Treasurer

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | | EXPENSES | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cash | | Printing | $ 809.00 |
| Persons within the state | $ 2,644.00 | Mailing | 727.00 |
| Groups within the state | 0 | Other media materials | 5,387.00 |
| Persons outside the state | 6,634.00 | Hospitality and entertainment | 1,489.00 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 | Campaign Committee expenses | 560.00 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 0 | Giveaway(s) if any | 406.00 |
| Donations in kind | 163.00 | Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | $9,441.00 | **TOTAL** | $9,378.00 |

*Signed: Dennis Van Roekel*

## Candidates for Executive Committee

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | | EXPENSES | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cash | | Printing | $ 1,238.35 |
| Persons within the state | $ 4,945.61 | Mailing | 53.99 |
| Groups within the state | 0 | Other media materials | 470.00 |
| Persons outside the state | 6,838.00 | Hospitality and entertainment | 0 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 | Campaign Committee expenses | 12,826.37 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 2,056.00 | Giveaway(s) if any | 1,992.34 |
| Donations in kind | 600.00 | Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 673.21 |
| **TOTAL** | $14,439.61 | **TOTAL** | $17,254.26 |

*Signed: Dan Sakota*

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | | EXPENSES | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cash | | Printing | $ 1,456.00 |
| Persons within the state | $ 1,255.00 | Mailing | 393.18 |
| Groups within the state | 1,000.00 | Other media materials | 2,881.00 |
| Persons outside the state | 2,710.00 | Hospitality and entertainment | 936.13 |
| Groups outside the state | 800.00 | Campaign Committee expenses | 3,468.72 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 2,415.00 | Giveaway(s) if any | 1,458.63 |
| Donations in kind | 500.00 | Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 1,000.00 |
| **TOTAL** | $ 8,680.00 | **TOTAL** | $11,593.66 |

*Signed: Iona A. Holloway*

# Candidates for NEA Director, ESP At Large

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $2,293.50 |
| Groups within the state | 0 |
| Persons outside the state | 14.00 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 565.00 |
| Donations in kind | 65.00 |
| **TOTAL** | $2,937.50 |

| EXPENSES | |
|---|---|
| Printing | $1,235.00 |
| Mailing | 350.00 |
| Other media materials | 115.00 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 250.00 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 750.00 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 425.00 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 225.00 |
| **TOTAL** | $3,350.00 |

*Signed: Bonnie Chalfant*

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $ 185.00 |
| Groups within the state | 0 |
| Persons outside the state | 0 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 1,638.00 |
| Donations in kind | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | $1,823.00 |

| EXPENSES | |
|---|---|
| Printing | $501.00 |
| Mailing | 163.00 |
| Other media materials | 111.00 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 0 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 656.00 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 257.00 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 133.00 |
| **TOTAL** | $1,821.00 |

*Signed: Debbie Minnick*

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $25.00 |
| Groups within the state | 580.00 |
| Persons outside the state | 0 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 0 |
| Donations in kind | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | $605.00 |

| EXPENSES | |
|---|---|
| Printing | $204.00 |
| Mailing | 0 |
| Other media materials | 46.90 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 0 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 375.00 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 0 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | $625.90 |

*Signed: Helen Cottongim*

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $1,483.00 |
| Groups within the state | 672.00 |
| Persons outside the state | 0 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 0 |
| Donations in kind | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | $2,155.00 |

| EXPENSES | |
|---|---|
| Printing | $ 662.22 |
| Mailing | 166.80 |
| Other media materials | 429.16 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 110.00 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 784.53 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 0 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | $2,152.71 |

*Signed: Paula J. Monroe*

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $220.00 |
| Groups within the state | 0 |
| Persons outside the state | 0 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 306.00 |
| Donations in kind | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | $526.00 |

| EXPENSES | |
|---|---|
| Printing | $169.31 |
| Mailing | 0 |
| Other media materials | 0 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 47.86 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 159.51 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 0 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 149.32 |
| **TOTAL** | $526.00 |

*Signed: Yvonne A. Henning*

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $145.00 |
| Groups within the state | 0 |
| Persons outside the state | 70.00 |
| Groups outside the state | 200.00 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 55.00 |
| Donations in kind | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | $470.00 |

| EXPENSES | |
|---|---|
| Printing | $935.00 |
| Mailing | 0 |
| Other media materials | 0 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 0 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 0 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 21.00 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 37.00 |
| **TOTAL** | $993.00 |

*Signed: Jimmie Myers*

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $415.01 |
| Groups within the state | 0 |
| Persons outside the state | 0 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 0 |
| Donations in kind | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | $415.01 |

| EXPENSES | |
|---|---|
| Printing | $264.14 |
| Mailing | 0 |
| Other media materials | 0 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 0 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 87.00 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 65.19 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | $416.33 |

*Signed: Jane Ligon*

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $50.00 |
| Groups within the state | 76.00 |
| Persons outside the state | 10.00 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 0 |
| Donations in kind | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | $136.00 |

| EXPENSES | |
|---|---|
| Printing | $121.14 |
| Mailing | 0 |
| Other media materials | 20.00 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 0 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 20.00 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 0 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | $161.14 |

*Signed: Sharon Scott*

TRUST

# (FACE-TO-FACE) COUNSELING

## *No-nonsense advice from a trustworthy counselor*

In many ways, a trusted financial representative can be compared to a professional educator. We all know that students learn far more from a classroom teacher than they ever can by just "reading the book." That face-to-face interaction brings meaning and context to the subject matter. A trusted financial counselor can do the same for your retirement planning.

The Security Benefit Group is now the exclusive provider of the NEA Valuebuilder® Program. NEA Valuebuilder financial representatives are available to help you determine your future financial needs and assist you in developing a solid retirement plan.

You can trust an NEA Valuebuilder representative to explain how to begin planning for a secure retirement and the benefits of:

- Tax Deferred Savings
- The Power of Compounding
- Flexibility, Portability and Control
- NEA Exclusive Endorsement

If you are looking for straightforward answers to your retirement planning questions, make plans to meet with a Security Benefit representative. You can expect to learn a lot about retirement planning from just one session with us.

*Call toll-free today to make an appointment with a financial representative* 1-877-NEA8668 ext 3655

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VBNT0401

# Looking Back on 2000 With an Eye on the Future

## Q: What investment lessons can we learn from 2000?

**A: It was a year of expensive lessons. Here are some of the most important ones:**

■ At the beginning of the year 2000, it was easy to say that things were different in the investing world. It's a new millennium, after all. So lots of investing pros argued that the old measures for valuing a stock were outdated and that the new economy was breaking new ground and writing new rules. Many people said that the old economy stocks, like those of banks, auto companies, and retailers, were "dogs"—now and forever.

Of course, those investors who thought it was different this time turned out to be wrong. The stock market, and particularly the technology stocks that trade on NASDAQ, tumbled—first in the spring, and then again in the fall. The lesson here is to remember that the market moves in cycles, and it's a mistake to believe that it will always go up. Or down.

■ Boosters of the new economy rejected the traditional value style of investing. Value investors look for companies that are beaten down by some traditional valuation such as the ratio between their stock price and earnings.

For much of the year, we heard that value was dead and that it would never come back. But one of the interesting things about looking back on the investment year of 2000 is that just as technology stocks collapsed last March, the value stocks came roaring back.

The lesson, again, is that history repeats itself and the market moves in cycles. It doesn't pay to get too caught up in the frenzy of the moment.

■ Diversification matters. That is our best lesson for the year. During the tech frenzy in 1998 and 1999, investors wanted to be where the action was. That meant technology. Many of them threw caution to the wind and put every dime into the new economy, which means technology, Internet, and biotech companies.

When those companies faltered, some investors were left with losses of 50 percent and more. One online investor told me his IRA portfolio went from $685,000 at the beginning of the year to just over $200,000 at the end.

It's not foolish to invest in technology. Technology represents the future, and it's an important investment. But investors need diversification, too. For some investors that means mutual funds with a value strategy. For others it means bonds, or even cash.

The lesson here is a simple one. Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

## Q: What do you think about teens having their own credit cards?

**A: We had a discussion in our online newsgroup about the pros and cons of these cards. The card is not really a credit card. Instead, the parent "loads" the card with a specific amount of money, say $50 or $100, and the teen spends it by using the card.**

I rather like the idea, although it depends almost totally on your child's personality. I have a 14-year-old daughter who is very careful with both her money and my money. I don't want her to carry cash at the mall. And I am toying with the idea of giving her a budget amount for spring clothes that I will transfer to the card. Once she spends it, she gets nothing else for the season.

I think that could be a good way to teach budgeting lessons. However, I know that she would not blow the entire amount on one goofy piece of clothing. She's too conservative. I also know that she wouldn't ask for more money, especially if she spent it foolishly.

Some members of my newsgroup thought it was a terrible idea, though. They said it teaches kids a sense of entitlement and causes them to think that money grows on trees. One mother said she'd be happier giving her teen a debit card on her own bank account. (I definitely wouldn't do this. My daughter is responsible, but we all have our limits!)

I do understand the entitlement issue. I would not give my daughter any extra money that was just for free spending. But I might put money I owe her for work or for her clothes budget on the card.

## Q: What is a good mutual fund for beginners?

**A: Unfortunately, there's no one magic mutual fund that can solve your investing problems.**

One of the biggest mistakes I see beginners make is to solicit friends for the name of a top fund and then put their money into it without understanding how funds work. The best starting point for all investors is education, and a good place to do it is online. Check www.morningstar.com as well as www.moneycentral.com, where I write a column. Learn about how the stock and bond markets work and grapple with what volatility means.

In general, it's better to stick with a broad-based fund, such as one that invests in the entire stock market. The Vanguard Total Stock Market Index Fund is one.

*—Mary Rowland*

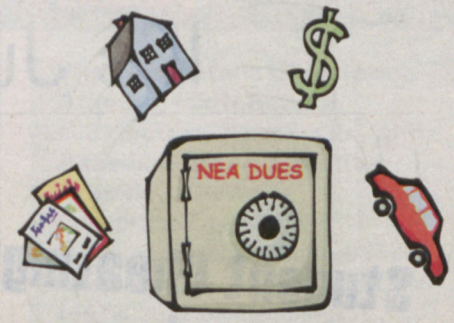
*Rowland contributes to several financial planning publications.*

## Thrifty Educator

***This month's tip comes from Thomas Chew, a media coordinator and TV production instructor at Perry High School in Perry, Ohio.***

**"Each of my students creates a fairly economical video autobiography using a VCR, TV/monitor, macro camera, and an audiocassette or CD player. Students organize material they've gathered—photos, awards, dolls/stuffed animals, and other 3-D items—into a logical sequence. Each item is placed under the macro camera and taped for three or four seconds. Then we dub in music and other audio with the cassette or CD player. We add titles by videotaping hand-drawn or computer-generated hard copies with the macro camera. This is a wonderful activity for students to learn more about their families and for the teacher to get to know their students."**

**If you have a favorite money-saving tip that you apply in your workplace, please send your idea along to neatoday@nea.org.**




Steven Parrish

**No NEA member dues dollars are ever used for NEA Member Benefits programs.**

## Heads Up from NEA Member Benefits

**If you're interested in taking advantage of the reductions in interest rates, take a look at the NEA Home Financing Program.**

**Refinancing an existing mortgage is a popular option for homeowners who want to lower monthly payments, secure a shorter mortgage loan term, or obtain cash for home improvements.**

**To learn the benefits of refinancing, call the NEA Mortgage Quickline at 800/NEA-4-YOU (800/632-4968) for the latest rates. If you decide to proceed, everything can be handled by telephone up until closing.**

**You also can inquire about the "Driveaway Getaway" vacation package available for those who close on a first mortgage or for those who refinance an existing mortgage through the NEA Home Financing Program.**

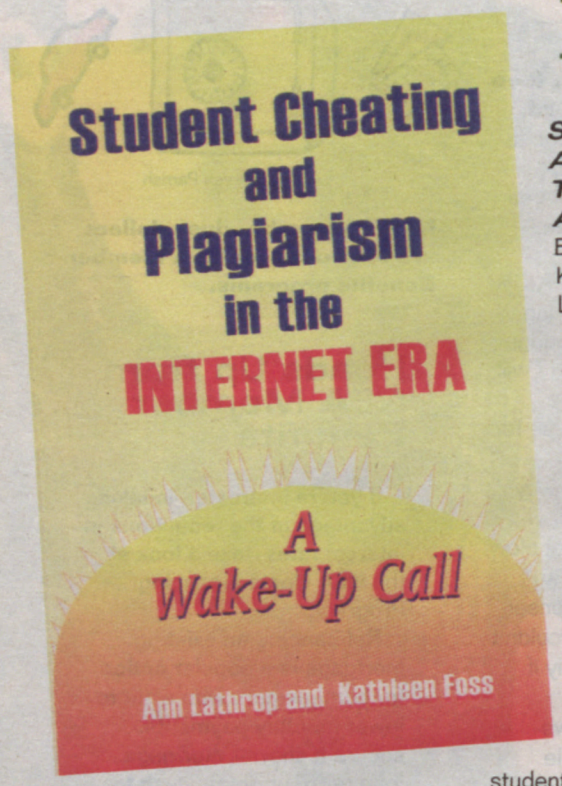
**The NEA Credit Plan has a new name: the NEA Personal Loan℠. Based on the results of a survey of NEA members, NEA Member Benefits decided to make the name of the loan program more descriptive.**

**The new name does not change any of the features of the loan program. The NEA Personal Loan is a fixed-rate, unsecured loan offering low, competitive rates. NEA members can borrow between $3,000 and $25,000, with no collateral required. Repayment terms are 24–84 months, and there are no prepayment penalties.**

**Visit the NEA Member Benefits Web Site at www.neamb.com or call Member Services Center toll free at 800/637-4636, Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET (or Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) to find out more about the NEA Personal Loan.**

# It's Just So Easy To Cheat

## Two NEA member-authors want educators to tackle the student cheating problem head on.




***STUDENT CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM IN THE INTERNET ERA: A WAKE-UP CALL***
By Ann Lathrop and Kathleen Foss
Libraries Unlimited: $30

There's no argument that high-tech gadgets such as cellular phones, pagers, and the Internet have made our lives easier. But according to authors Ann Lathrop and Kathleen Foss, both NEA members, technology has also made it easier for students to cheat.

"Teachers and educators have always dealt with students who cheat," says Foss, a media specialist at Los Alamitos High School in California. "But it's a new game now."

Foss and Lathrop, a retired professor from California State University at Long Beach, collaborated on the book last year after a student at Foss's school turned in a plagiarized paper—downloaded from one of the many Web sites that offer pre-written papers to students. After countless hours on the Internet searching out the original source of the paper, Foss was floored by what she found.

"I was shocked at how easy it is to download papers and directly plagiarize from electronic information," she says. "I know educators know what might exist, but I don't think they realize the breadth and depth of just how easy technology makes it to cheat."

This book, she says, is meant to serve as a wake-up call for all teachers, administrators, and even parents.

"We wrote it to expose the realities of cheating today," says Lathrop, a 41-year veteran. "With knowledge comes power. If educators know what's happening, they'll know better how to deal with it."

Divided into three parts, the book—which is dedicated to honest students—serves as a useful guide for educators who want to reduce cheating and plagiarizing in their classrooms and at their school. It is a compilation of helpful ideas and practical strategies from dozens of authors and experts to counter both high-tech and more traditional "low-tech" cheating and plagiarism.

Part One, "A Wake Up Call: What's Going On," presents national research statistics, quotes from students about why they cheat, and an overview of just how students are using high-tech equipment such as handheld computers, programmable calculators, pagers, and other electronic devices to cheat.

Some recent statistics presented in the book: 80 percent of high school students admit to cheating, 95 percent of students who cheat say they don't get caught, and 34 percent say their parents never talk to them about cheating.

Part Two, "A Call to Action: What We Can Do," outlines what educators must do to counter the cheating epidemic—for example, ways teachers can use technology and Web sites to spot research papers downloaded from the Internet, ways to involve parents more fully in an anti-cheating curriculum, and suggestions for developing academic integrity policies and honor codes. The authors also offer useful advice and specific examples on how to handle students who are caught cheating.

And Part Three, "Taking Action: Making It More Difficult to Cheat and Plagiarize," points out indicators of possible plagiarism and offers teachers specific ideas for how to structure assignments in order to reduce plagiarism.

Throughout the book, Lathrop and Foss provide an abundance of Web sites for more information, reproducible lessons for students and faculty to help discourage cheating, and lists of online and print resources. They also include 20 "copy me" pages to share with others, including "High-Tech Devices Used for Cheating," "When Is Collaboration Okay," and "Research Portfolio Cover Sheet."

*—Dina S. Gómez*

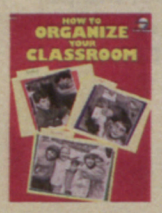
### EXCERPT

"We know students are cheating more often today; their cheating techniques are increasingly sophisticated, and many express guilt or remorse only if they are caught. Why do they cheat? The bottom line seems to be 1) it's easy, especially with new technologies, 2) fewer than 10 percent are caught, and 3) most of those who are caught get off without serious penalty. The byword appears to have changed from Don't cheat to Don't get caught."

## BOOKS by NEA Members

**Can We Eat the Art?**
*Incredible Edibles and Art You Can't Eat*
By Paula Guhin
A gumball as the Earth's core and vanilla wafers as the crust, with custard and fudge in between? This is just one of the ideas you'll find in *Can We Eat the Art?* From edible paints and clays, to painted toast, potato sculptures, gelatin sticker glue, and flour batik, South Dakota high school art and photography teacher Guhin provides dozens of "kid-tested" projects for grades pre-K–8, along with safety and sensitivity tips and games and ideas for linking the art to other content areas. $9.95 plus $4 s&h, from Incentive Publications, 800/421-2830 or on the Web at www.incentivepublications.com.

**Caring and Capable Kids**
*An Activity Guide for Teaching Kindness, Tolerance, Self-Control, and Responsibility*
By Linda Williams, Dianne Schilling, and Susanna Palomares
*Caring and Capable Kids* combines short stories, sharing circles, and songs with dozens of writing, research, art, and other projects in eight developmental units: kindness, tolerance, respect, service to others, responsibility, self-control, peer pressure, and ethical decision making. The songs used are also available on a cassette that can be ordered separately. For primary and middle grades. $24.95 plus $5 s&h, from Innerchoice Publishing, PO Box 2476, Spring Valley, CA 91979, 800/662-9662.




**How to Organize Your Classroom**
By Katherine Ruggieri
This reference guide by multi-grade elementary teacher Ruggieri gives concrete tips for organizing the primary classroom, from arranging desks and designing bulletin boards and storage space, to handling fire drills, assemblies, field trips, restroom passes, and roll call; keeping track of and displaying student work; communicating with students, parents, and staff; and dealing with paperwork. Also includes specific suggestions for teaching math, reading, and language arts. $11.99 plus $3 s&h, from Fearon Teacher Aids, Frank Shaffer Publications, Inc., 23740 Hawthorne Blvd., Torrance, CA 90505-5927, 800/421-5565.

**Daisy's Bayou Tales**
By Daisy Howard-Douglas
Storyteller and retired elementary teacher Howard-Douglas shares stories and recipes from her childhood in a Louisiana island village. Try Daisy's island gumbo recipe or Mama Julia's island pecan pie, or read about Daisy's Tiger Island. For ages 7–12, with woodcut illustrations by Dennis Winston. $18 plus $3.50 s&h, from Daisy Howard-Douglas, PO Box 37, Sandy Point, VA 22577-0037.

## FREE OR INEXPENSIVE

### White Teachers, Multiracial Schools

*We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools*, by Gary R. Howard, combines research literature with Howard's 25 years of experience as a multicultural educator, to explore the problems facing white teachers in schools struggling for cultural competence. $20.95 plus $4.95 s&h, from Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027.

### Soul Searching

*Soul Searching: A Girl's Guide to Finding Herself*, by 16-year-old Sarah Stillman, introduces girls aged 10–16 to meditation, journaling, feng shui, aromatherapy, yoga, at-home spa treatments, dream interpretation, volunteering, world religions, and philosophy. $10.95 from Beyond Words Publishing, Inc. To order, call 800/284-9673.

### Fighting Drug Use Among Hispanic Youth

New from the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, *A Toolkit for Hispanic/Latino Community Groups: Organizing Hispanic/Latino Communities for the Prevention of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illicit Drug Use* includes facts about drug use among Hispanic youth, risk and protective factors, tips for organizing, prevention program strategies, and checklists and worksheets. Available in both English and Spanish. Free, from the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information. To order, call 800/729-6686 or visit www.health.org.

### Intolerance in America

*Us and Them: A History of Intolerance in America* by Jim Carnes presents 14 narrative case stories of religious, racial, homophobic, and anti-immigrant persecution in America from the 1600s to today. With historical photos and original documents. $12.95, young adult, from Oxford University Press. To order, call 800/451-7556 or visit www.oup.com.

### Chemistry Projects

Bob Bonnet and Dan Keen present some 50 different projects for middle school and older elementary students, using common household ingredients, in *Science Fair Projects: Chemistry*. Glossary included. $9.95, from Sterling Publishing Co., Inc. To order, call 800/805-5489 or visit www.sterlingpub.com.

### Drug Use Prevention

The *Spring 2000 Publications Catalog* of the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information features hundreds of pamphlets, posters, fact sheets, videotapes, reports, and other treatment and prevention resources. Includes materials targeted to teens or parents and materials for working with young children. Most are free and many are bilingual and available in bulk quantities. To order, call 800/729-6686 or visit www.health.org to view the catalog online.

The Competent Classroom
Aligning High School Curriculum, Standards, and Assessment—
A Creative Teaching Guide
Allison Zmuda • Mary Tomaino
Foreword by Patricia Wasley

**NEW from the NEA Professional Library**

**The Competent Classroom: Aligning High School Curriculum, Standards, and Assessment—A Creative Teaching Guide**
*Copublished by NEA and Columbia Teachers College Press*
Allison Zmuda and Mary Tomaino
144 pp., $12.95 members
$14.95 nonmembers
#2084-7-00-FN

EXCERPT

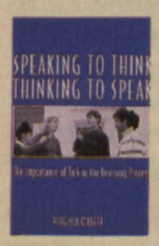
**The four components of a competent classroom are:**

- **essential questions**
- **content standards and instructional objectives**
- **assessments**
- **performance standards**

**When all four are in alignment, the learning environment becomes a more dynamic, exciting, and enriching place for both teacher and student: They feel competent in the classroom. Every component interlocks with every other component, producing a classroom with a consistent sense of purpose and direction.**

This enlightening book describes the cross-disciplinary journey of two high school teachers trying to align curriculum, assessment, and performance standards in their classrooms. With a focus on the importance of constantly inspiring students, the authors troubleshoot issues surrounding content standards, instructional objectives, and the aims of curriculum. *The Competent Classroom* contains valuable information that can be adapted for any grade level. Teachers will get practical advice on how to achieve greater success in the classroom while making learning meaningful to their students.

**To order, call 800-229-4200, or check the Web at www.nea.org/books.**

### Speaking to Think, Thinking to Speak

*The Importance of Talk in the Learning Process*
By Virginia O'Keefe

"Since speaking to ourselves and others is the primary way we learn throughout our lives, when we [minimize classroom talk], we handicap our learners." So believes veteran teacher O'Keefe. The author discusses the theory and research behind the philosophy that student talk helps shape their learning and thought processes. She includes strategies for teachers to use in managing discussions. $27 from Boynton/Cook, 88 Post Road West, PO Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881, 800/793-2154.

## TVTIPS

### American High

*PBS, Wednesdays, 10:00–11:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.*

The lives of 14 suburban Chicago high school students over the course of a school year are profiled in this observational documentary that looks at how they deal with such everyday issues as love, the pressure to succeed, self-discovery, divorce, and family conflicts. Video diaries supplement the story of the students and their interactions with parents, teachers, and friends. A companion Web site at www.pbs.org includes an interactive yearbook, video diaries, discussion boards, quizzes, and behind-the-scenes footage, along with outreach materials for schools. ✔

## TV TIPS

### Body Story

*Discovery Channel, April 1, 7:00–11:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.*

This four-hour program explores the human body's response to trauma and stress, from head injury to weight loss. As the cause of each stressful incident is explained, special effects illustrate the body's reaction. How the body reacts to such biological events as birth, puberty, and food poisoning is also examined.

### Wives and Daughters

*PBS, Sundays, April 1–22, 9:00–10:30 p.m. ET, check local listings.*

Based on the 19th century novel by Elizabeth Gaskell, this four-part Masterpiece Theater presentation chronicles the development of two young women brought together by their parents' marriage. The women's relationships with young and eligible men take place under the watchful eyes of their village and within the hierarchy of mid-Victorian society. Support materials are available at www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece.

### EGG, the arts show

*PBS, Fridays, 10:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.*

This new series focuses on the excitement, diversity, and raw energy of arts across the country. Each weekly episode of this new arts show takes a theme—happiness, body language, and flight, among others—and explores it through the prism of the arts, from bonsai to dance. A companion Web site can be found at www.pbs.org.

### The Weather Classroom: Weather and Water

*Weather Channel, Mondays and Thursdays in April, 4:00–4:30 a.m. ET, check local listings.*

The Weather Classroom looks at water as a central element of the weather during the month of April. The program examines the various manifestations of $H_2O$, including rain, clouds, mist, fog, dew, vapor, and humidity. A Web site for educators can be found at www.weather.com/education.

### The Writing on the Wall

*Fox Family Channel, April 10, 4:00–5:00 a.m. ET, check local listings.*

When three teenage boys are caught defacing a local synagogue and the homes of two Jewish community members, they must restore the damage and participate in community service. As part of their sentence, the boys undergo instruction from the synagogue's rabbi, who decides to let them learn what life was like for Jewish teens during the Holocaust. Each boy relives the experiences and emotions of his subject, with unforgettable results. Study guides produced by KIDSNET for middle school educators are available online, along with a bulletin board forum. Visit www.foxfamilychannel.com or www.KIDSNET.org.

### Diplomats for the Damned

*History Channel, April 12, 6:00–7:00 a.m. ET, check local listings.*

During World War II, diplomats from more than 25 countries risked their lives by secretly issuing unauthorized visas, falsifying papers, and making covert deals to rescue people from Nazi death camps. This presentation of The History Channel Classroom profiles the stories of four diplomats who worked in different ways to help thousands of Jews flee Europe. For support materials, visit www.historychannel.com/classroom.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Mon.– Fri., 8 a.m. – midnight, E.T., Saturday, 9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., E.T.
Home Equity Hours: Mon. – Thu. 8 a.m. – 10 p.m., Fri. 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., E.T

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**Branches: Enter DM# DMC0063299V in LIS. Refer to Affinity Programs At-A-Glance for additional details.**

EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

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### Varian's War

*Showtime, April 22, 8:00–10:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.*

This dramatization of the life of Varian Fry tells the story of his courageous efforts to rescue individuals persecuted by the Nazis in France during World War II. Under his own initiative, and without aid from the U.S. government, the New York-born Fry created an underground rescue network that saved some of the most influential cultural figures of the 20th century, including Marc Chagall, Hannah Arendt, and Heinrich Mann.

### CNN Newsroom: Fuel Alternatives

*CNN, April 23, 4:30–5:00 a.m. ET, check local listings.*

Tom Haynes examines the issue of fossil fuel depletion and talks with experts about energy alternatives, including solar, nuclear, wind, and other sources. Also in April, CNN Newsroom looks at allergies and new advances in combating this health problem, and CNNfyi.com presents an interactive Web cast that explores the past, present, and future of space travel and technology. For more information, or to access CNN Newsroom classroom guides, visit www.cnnfyi.com.

### Investigative Reports

*A&E Classroom, April 23–27, 7:00–8:00 a.m. ET, check local listings.*

A&E Classroom looks at issues facing schools, teachers, and students in this week-long focus on education. From the problem of bullies in school and the exodus of teachers from the classroom, to the pressures faced by student athletes and the problem of hazing, these documentaries delve into experiences common to American education. Visit www.aande.com/classroom for schedules and support material.

### Ocean Wilds

*PBS, Thursdays, April 24–May 24, 8:00–9:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.*

Orca, humpback, and sperm whales, along with giant

manta rays and equatorial penguins, are the focus of this five-part series that concentrates on some of the world's most fascinating ocean animals. Diver, naturalist, and cinematographer Feodor Pitcairn weaves the series' narrative together with scientific facts and personal observations.

### Understanding Evolution

*The Learning Channel, April 27, 10:00–11:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.*

Although published more than 140 years ago, Charles Darwin's theory of evolution remains controversial today. This program considers the scientific evidence that has emerged in support of Darwin's theory, including work on the Human Genome Project, and looks at the future evolution of the human species.

### Redwall

*PBS, April, check local listings.*

This new series brings Brian Jacques's magical world of Redwall Abbey to life, introducing young viewers to a mythical, medieval land populated by woodland creatures who embody the positive and endearing qualities of humor, companionship, and courage.

### A Walk in Your Shoes

*Nickelodeon & Noggin, check local listings.*

This half-hour program takes people from completely different backgrounds and places them into each other's lives. Upcoming exchanges include an only child who switches places with a teenager with seven siblings, two girls from India and America who take over each other's lives, and a blind girl who teaches a sighted boy what it is like to be visually impaired. The exchanges provide an exploration into a wide range of people, places, and ways of life, and they allow viewers to see similarities that exist between people who may initially seem very different.

*KIDSNET, a national resource for children's media in Washington, D.C., provides these listings. For additional listings and information, check the Web at www.kidsnet.org.*

## FREE OR INEXPENSIVE

### Crafts for Kids

*150 Nifty Super Crafts for Kids* includes step-by-step instructions, safety tips, gift ideas, planning guidelines for craft parties or a craft fair, and plenty of illustrations. $9.95, plus s&h from McGraw-Hill Children's Publishing. Call 888/285-5118.

### Sun-Earth Connections

*The Real Reasons for Seasons: Sun-Earth Connections,* a Great Explorations in Math and Science teacher's guide, leads middle school students through eight inquiry-based activities to correct misconceptions and to help students understand the relationship between the Sun and the Earth's seasons. Includes a student lab book for duplication and a CD-ROM with multimedia resources and seasonal simulation and planetarium software. $25.50 plus $6 s&h, from the University of California at Berkeley. To order, call 510/642-7771 or visit www.lhs.berkeley.edu/GEMS/.

### The Work of the U.S. Congress

You can easily follow the numerous steps in the federal lawmaking process, from the origin of an idea for a legislative proposal through its publication as a statute, in the newest edition of *How Our Laws Are Made.* It includes an appendix listing selected, subject-related government publications. $3.25 from the Office of the Parliamentarian at the U.S. House of Representatives. Send check to Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954, 202/512-1800, or order online at http://bookstore.gpo.gov.

### Wash Your Hands

The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc. (APIC) believes that hand washing is a learned behavior—and the earlier one starts, the more likely the practice will continue throughout the life span. APIC has developed a teaching tool called the *Soapysaurus Activity Book,* which contains coloring and connect the dots exercises, puzzles, mazes, fill-in-the-word games, songs, and stickers. $22 for APIC members, $27 for non-members. Contact APIC at 202/789-1890 or visit www.apic.org.

### A World of Possibilities

Mid-graders will learn that opening books opens the mind to a world of possibilities in *The First Timer's Guide to Book Reports.* This book makes things easy for beginners by using a step-by-step guide to classic writing assignments from outline to summary to finished project. Kids will find everything they need to get started on their book report. 64 pp. $8.95 from NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group, 4255 West Touhy Ave., Lincolnwood, IL 60712-1975, or call 847/679-5500.

### Armfuls of Art

Go beyond the refrigerator door with the overwhelming number of creations your child brings home from school each year. *Mom's Little Book of Displaying Children's Art* contains 75 wonderful ideas on easy ways to display, recycle, and preserve the most memorable creations from your child's school years. With more than 170 photos of projects and step-by-step instructions, there's something for everyone. The book focuses on matting, framing, scrapbooks, home décor, cards, gifts, gift tags, and invitations. $11.95 from Creating Keepsakes, Inc. See also *Mom's Little Book of Photo Tips* ($16.95). To order, visit www.creatingkeepsakes.com.

## WEB WINNERS

### All about Harry

There's a rich new sector that's hatched in cyberspace: www.harrypotter.com, where the Hogwarts Express whisks visitors to magically inspired destinations.

### Ecologically Sound

How polluted is your environment? Are local plants and animals at risk? Type in a ZIP Code and find out at www.formyworld.com.

### Lizards, Pandas

Project Panda celebrates the return of giant panda bears to the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. A companion of the Animal Planet cable channel, the site also features lizards of the world and the animal of the week. Or visit www.animal.discovery.com/animal.html.

### Best School Web Site?

You can nominate your school's Web site for the "School of the Week" award, or get answers to frequently asked questions or ideas for student projects from HomeworkSpot. You can also take an online tour of the White House, get the national and international news, and see the winners of children's book awards. All this and more on www.HomeworkSpot.com.

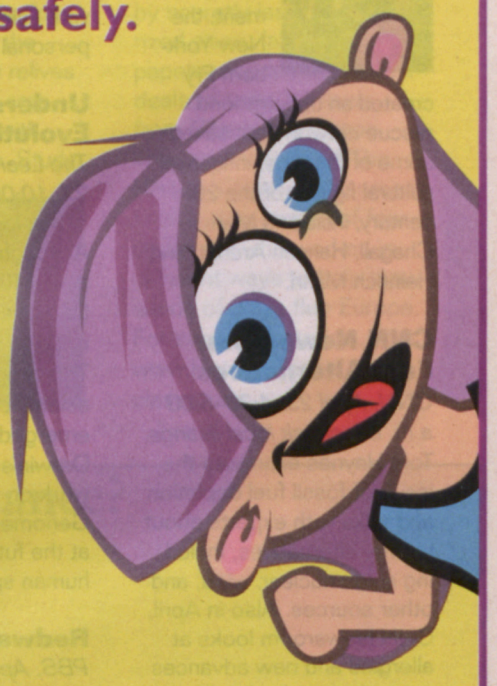
### Being Eloquent

A.Word.A.Day teaches its free subscribers the definition and pronunciation of English words one word a day. Go to www.wordsmith.org/awad.

# CyberSurfari.org

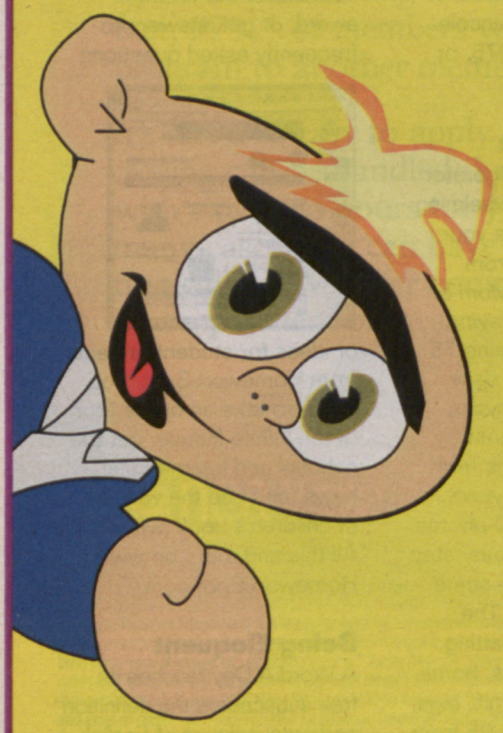
## A free, fun and safe Internet treasure hunt for K-12 students and teachers

**This educational game offers more than $100,000 in cash and prizes as it teaches players to navigate the Web safely. Each of three contests per year includes more than 100 hand-picked online destinations to explore and learn about the Internet.**



There are 9 divisions of play including school, family, and individual categories. The sign-up is fast, easy and private. We don't sell or rent the names of our players to anyone.

New games start in February, June, and October. Each contest lasts more than 3 months which offers players plenty of time to surf, learn and win!



## For all the details, visit

## http://www.cybersurfari.org

or contact Katy Mason at kmason@cybersurfari.org.

**CyberSurfari is brought to you by The Children's Web Surfing Alliance, a nonprofit 501-C3 educational organization, and these generous sponsors:**

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### This Is a Test

The Foresight Exchange offers a new form of entertainment—a place where you can test your ability to predict the outcome of future events against other players. Go to www.ideafutures.com.

### Help for People in Crisis

Kidsrights publishes helpful materials for children, adolescents, their families, and

the professionals who work with them in crisis. Its new Web site has valuable resources for helping the healing process. Visit www.kidsrights.com.

### Cyber Playground

This is a helpful resource for teachers, parents, and librarians, and even those with little or no online experience, to use the Internet effectively to aid teaching. Go to www.cyberplayground.org.

### For Young Readers

The National Children's Literacy Project publishes *Kid's Courier*, a free news-

paper for students in grades 2–5. Its Web site has interactive games, study aids, cartoons, stories, and other fun stuff. Visit www.kidscourier.com.

### Get the Scoop On the Best Books

Experts in a variety of fields offer reading recommendations at Breakthrough Books, a site listing works that have defined a particular area of thought. Examples include American cinema, nuclear weapons, dance, the Internet and World Wide Web, reading, opera, medicine, Victorian studies, and many more. Visit www.linguafranca.com/bookworm/breakthrough.

### More on Black History

Learn about Negro League baseball; civil rights milestones; biographies of notable government officials, scholars, educators, actors, musicians, sports figures; and more. Visit www.infoplease.com/spot/bhm1.html.

### White House for Kids

Find out about different aspects of the White House and the Presidency from the children who grew up there to the pets who slept in the Oval Office. Learn about the unique and fascinating history of the White House, past first families, the first ladies, and White House facts. You can even take a historical tour of the White House at this site. Visit www.whitehouse.gov/kids.

### Shipwrecks—A Link To the Past

Using underwater archaeology, learn about the past from maritime finds—shipwrecks, dwellings, and ports. Thousands of ships have perished worldwide, most yet to be located. This virtual museum guides you through the basics of underwater archeology, with exhibits on the Titanic, the world's oldest ships, and more. Visit www.abc.se/~pa/uwa/hot.htm.


# MindOverMedia:

## HELPING KIDS GET THE MESSAGE

Join Court TV, the National Education Association, and Cable in the Classroom for a special presentation on the links between the media, youth behavior, culture and violence. Learn how to empower kids to approach the media with a discriminating eye.

## TO WATCH THE SHOW:

**THURSDAY, MAY 24 at 2 pm ET/PT**

**Ask your media specialist to tape it via the NEA Safe Schools Now Network satellite feed. Satellite coordinates can be found at www.safeschoolsnow.org**

**SATURDAY, MAY 26 at 1 pm ET/PT ON COURT TV**

TUNE INTO COURT TV'S *CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES* PROGRAMMING

**SATURDAYS in JUNE at 4 am ET/PT ON COURT TV**

OR WATCH IT COMMERCIAL-FREE DURING COURT TV'S *CABLE IN THE CLASSROOM* TIME SLOT

nea
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COURT TV

For more information on Choices and Consequences go to www.courttv.com

### Disaster Aid

Here's a way to use the Web and generate money for worthwhile causes. Each time you go to www.worldaidweb.com, you generate a small bit of funding for disaster victims.

### Search Engines

Photos of the "Birthplace of Silicon Valley" in Palo Alto,

California, and more than 800 specialized Web search engines are on CNET Search.com. Visit www.search.com.

### On Location in Mexico

Join volunteers in a real-time Web documentary project as they work to heal children with cleft lips and cleft palates during this volunteer medical mission to Mexico. Each day, reports, photos, and multimedia from the mission in and out of the operating rooms are uploaded to this Web site as a live, virtual mission project. Visit www.operationrainbow.com/missions/2001/mexico.

### All about Books

The Children's Web Guide is an extensive guide to literature for children and young adults. This site includes book reviews, online forums and links to book awards and authors. Go to www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/.

### Introduction to Ballet

Enter the American Ballet Theater Web site to see

performance dates, a ballet dictionary, and more, at www.abt.org.

### Science Buffs Take Note

Learn about the Near Earth Asteroid Rendezvous (NEAR) mission, the first of NASA's Discovery missions and the first mission ever to go into orbit around an asteroid. View NEAR Eros descent images, images of Eros from orbit and approach, and science results from Eros. The site also contains detailed NEAR spacecraft and mission information, at http://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/near.html.

### Decisions, Decisions

Here's an excellent resource for teachers who want to get their students discussing current events. Students have to evaluate arguments on either side of an issue, then vote on them. Visit www.tomsnyder.com/ddonline.

### Applications on a Shoestring

This Web site is designed to acquaint middle school teachers with economical multimedia tools and ideas for Web-based educational activities that they will be able to use or adapt in their classrooms. Go to http://library.advanced.org/50001/.

### Lively Lessons

A collection of over 450 free lesson plans organized by subject and grade level for teachers to use in their classrooms. Teachers can add their own, too. Go to www.lessonplanspage.com.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Foreign Exchange Teachers

Teachers who would like to take advantage of the American Foreign Service Global Educators Program to various countries—including Thailand, Argentina, Spain, China, Mexico, and South Africa—for the summer or fall of 2001 must submit applications by April 1. There are programs available for the summer, a semester, or a year. For more details, call or E-mail Helen Wu at 800/876-2377 x442 or hwu@ afs.org. Schools requesting exchange teachers for next year must also request applications and submit them on behalf of their school or school system to enable them to have a teacher for the 2001–02 school year.

### Be A Part of History: Choose Our National Tree

Maybe you didn't know the United States doesn't have a national tree. You and your students can change that. The Arbor Day Foundation is making it possible for everyone to vote for America's National Tree. Go online at www.arborday.org and vote for the tree you think should be America's National Tree. Voting ends at midnight, the day before National Arbor Day, April 27. If you don't have Internet access, you can write your selection on a 3 × 5 card and send it to National Tree, The National Arbor Day Foundation, Nebraska City, NE 68410.

### Break Free of TV!

Here is a fun approach to re-evaluate the role television plays in our lives. April 23–29, 2001, marks the 7th annual National TV-Turnoff Week. It provides a great opportunity for schools and families to enjoy turning off TV and turning on life. By turning off the TV, everyone will be afforded more time for reading—a skill that grows increasingly more important in this information age. Visit www.tvturnoff.org for details.

### Survival Story On The Giant Screen

*Shackleton's Antarctic Adventure* premiered in New York City in February and is currently showing in additional giant-screen theaters worldwide.

The film, a true story, retraces the travels and trials of Sir Ernest Shackleton, a polar explorer and leader of the British Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition who in 1914 set out to be the first to cross Antarctica.

The story describes how Shackleton led his 27-man crew to safety, without a life lost, by living on ice floes and surviving an 800-mile lifeboat journey after their ship, the Endurance, was caught in pack ice and eventually crushed.

The film features dramatic re-creations filmed in the Antarctic and a replication of Shackleton's crossing of South Georgia Island by three of the world's most renowned mountaineers.

### Poets in April

This is National Poetry Month and it's being marked by a contest to vote for our favorite poets for future stamps. At the end of the month, a special committee will tally the nominations and present them to the U.S. Postal Service. To get details about nominating procedures and to check out the calendar of events marking National Poetry Month, go to www.poets.org.

### Space in May

The fifth annual Space Day Celebration encourages people of all ages to advance science, math, and technology education. Space Day 2001... the Odyssey Continues will be celebrated on May 3, with a spectacular one-day event at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum and at local Space Day acitivities all over the U.S. and Canada.

To learn about Space Day activities in your area, visit www.spaceday.com.

### Honoring Educators

The All-USA Teacher Team is open to active, full-time, certified teachers and instructional teams teaching kindergarten through 12th grade at public or private schools in the United States or its territories, or at Department of Defense schools overseas. Both individuals and instructional teams can be nominated. Postmark deadline for the 2001 All-USA Teacher Team is June 30, 2001. The teams will be announced in *USA Today* in October. For more information, go to http://usatoday.com/life/academic/2001/tintro.htm.

### President's Student Service Challenge

Millions of students volunteer every day, improving communities and making America stronger. The President's Student Service Challenge is an opportunity for schools, colleges, and community organizations to recognize these young people for their outstanding community service and to encourage more young people to serve.

The Challenge consists of two programs, one for scholarships and one for awards. Through the President's Student Service Scholarship program, each high school in the country may select two students from among the junior and senior classes to receive a $1,000 scholarship each for outstanding community service.

All students from kindergarten through college who contribute at least 100 hours of service to the community are eligible for the President's Student Service Award. Applications and additional information can be found at www.student-serviceawards. org, by E-mail at info@studentservicescholarship.org, or by calling 866/291-7700.

## DIVERSITY Calendar

### June

**Race Unity Day, June 11**
Since 1957, Baha'is have set aside the second Sunday in June to promote racial harmony and understanding and to emphasize the intrinsic oneness of humanity. For more information, visit http://bahai.about. com/religion/bahai/library/weekly/aa060300a.htm.

**First Women in Space, June 16 and June 18**
Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman in space on June 16, 1963, when she orbited the earth in the Vostok 6. Twenty years and two days later, Sally Ride would become the first American woman in space riding aboard the space shuttle Challenger. Visit http://quest.arc.nasa.gov/women/ for teaching tips, interactive web events, and chats with the current Women of NASA, or www.nasa.gov/women/milestones.html for a timeline of women's contributions to aviation and space science.

**Juneteenth, June 19**
Union soldiers first brought news of the Emancipation Proclamation to Texas on June 19th, 1865. Juneteenth has been celebrated in Texas ever since, and has now spread throughout the United States. Check www.juneteenth.com for more on Juneteenth's history and an events calendar.

**Day of the African Child, June 16**
Begun in 1991 in memory of schoolchildren killed in the 1976 Soweto massacre, the Day of the African child is celebrated as a way to bring attention to the achievements and future challenges of Africa and to celebrate the heritage of African American children. Call 800/FOR-KIDS for information or E-mail information@unicefusa.org.

## VIDEOS

### Stuttering and The Preschool Child:

Watching a young child struggle to speak can be devastating. They can be helped, and parents play a vital role in this process. The nonprofit Stuttering Foundation of America has produced a 30-minute video that describes the kinds of stuttering young children may exhibit, how parents can help, and the role of a speech pathologist in evaluating and treating children who stutter. The Foundation provides this new videotape free of charge to all public libraries nationwide. It is also available for a $5 postage and handling fee from The Stuttering Foundation of America, P.O. Box 11749, Memphis, TN 38111-0749. Or visit www.stuttering help.org.

### Historical Videos

Two separate videos, each 48 minutes long, cover two areas of immense historical signficance. In *Jerusalem*, see rare footage of the city's most magnificent treasures, including the location where Jesus was crucified, the historic Wailing Wall, the Moslem Dome of the Rock, and much more. Learn the exciting history of this unique city that has religious significance for millions of diverse people around the world. In *Ancient Greece*, the complex and intriguing philosophies of Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, and Pythagoras are analyzed in a simple yet comprehensive fashion suitable for both student and scholar. See stunning graphics set against beautiful backdrops of the Acropolis in Athens and the Oracle at Delphi.

Both are available for $29.95 each from TMW Media Group, 2321 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice, CA. Call 310/577-8581 or see www.tmwmedia.com.

### Space Travelers

Also from TMW Media, *Women in Space*, a 55-minute production, and *America—the Living Dream*, a 48-minute video.

*Women in Space* profiles the first American women astronauts. They include Sally Ride, Mary Cleave, Kathryn Sullivan, Bonnie Dunbar, Shannon Lucid, Ann Fischer, and Rhea Seddon.

*America—the Living Dream* covers the history of the United States through the 20th century. Discover in whose honor America was named and who really were the first to arrive in the new world.

Call 310/577-8581 or visit www.tmwmedia.com to order.

# in the Light Lane

## President George

As I began teaching a song about George Washington to my kindergarten class, I decided to go for a teachable moment.

First, I asked if anyone knew whose picture was on the dollar bill I was holding. A hand went up, and a young boy confidently answered, "It's George Washington, D.C."

That was funny only to me, as I noticed the other eager learners sitting in their chairs ready for more. I then asked who George Washington was, and several knew he was the first president.

With the recent inauguration having just taken place, I jumped on the "teachable moment" and asked if anyone knew the name of our current president.

I was pleased to see numerous hands go up and then hear many respond with the name "George Bush." I decided to see how far I could go with this and asked if anyone knew who was president before George Bush.

One hand went up, the same little guy who knew of George Washington, D.C. He proudly stated that the previous president was "George Clinton."

*Michael Merry*
Cincinnati, Ohio

I was teaching my advanced algebra and trig class how to maximize a rectangular area, trying to use real world examples. We have a lot of families in the area who breed dogs. So I told my students that they were raising dogs and want to keep the male dogs out of the female dogs' pens, and to do that we'll need an additional length of fence to complete the area.

I reminded them that the piece of the fence that separates the two pens must be the same length as the sides that it is parallel with—because if it wasn't, then they'd be able to answer that question that everyone is asking.

They looked at me with puzzled and confused looks. After a pause, I said, "You know, the question that everyone is asking: Who let the dogs out?" They all groaned, but I think it got the point across.

*John Chester*
Jacksonville, North Carolina

I was teaching a genetics concept in a biology class a few years ago. I told the students that capital letters are used to represent dominant alleles and lowercase letters represent recessive alleles (for example, T = tall and t = short). One of my tenth grade students raised her hand and said, "Miss Forand, do you mean that we have little letters floating around in our bodies?" It was very hard to keep a straight face while the other 27 students roared with laughter.

*Judy Forand*
Northampton, Pennsylvania

I was teaching an enriched algebra II math class (10th and 11th grades). As I told them what page to open to in the textbook, I wrote it on the chalkboard. Of course, someone yelled out, "What page?" This student's friend hit him on the arm, pointed to the chalkboard, and yelled out, "It's written right there! What are you, illegitimate or something?"

*Suzanne Krieger*
Cresskill, New Jersey

Whenever possible, I try to prepare my classes for a substitute teacher by impressing upon them how overworked and underpaid our few substitutes are.

Students always want to know who the substitute will be, so one day I told them, "I never know who it will be, but I do expect you to be on your best behavior no matter who it is." To this, one student named Jason thoughtfully and immediately responded, "I sure hope that Pamela Anderson is on the list!"

*Kristi Bancroft Boucher*
West Paris, Maine

I'd been teaching my first grade class the names of different shapes, such as hexagon, rhombus, and trapezoid. I asked the students if they knew the name of the shape that I was holding in front of them. When I held up a trapezoid-shaped block, one little boy named George raised his hand. When I called on him, he excitedly shouted, "It's a freakazoid!"

*Lisa Guerrera*
Vallejo, California

For National School Nurses' Day, one of my third grade classes gave me a "thank you" book with messages and drawings from each student. A seriously ADHD student wrote, "Thank you for being my nurse and thank you for giving me my meds. Michael Y." At the end of the book was another message: "Thank you for everything and thank you for giving meds to Michael Y. Your friend, Brendon."

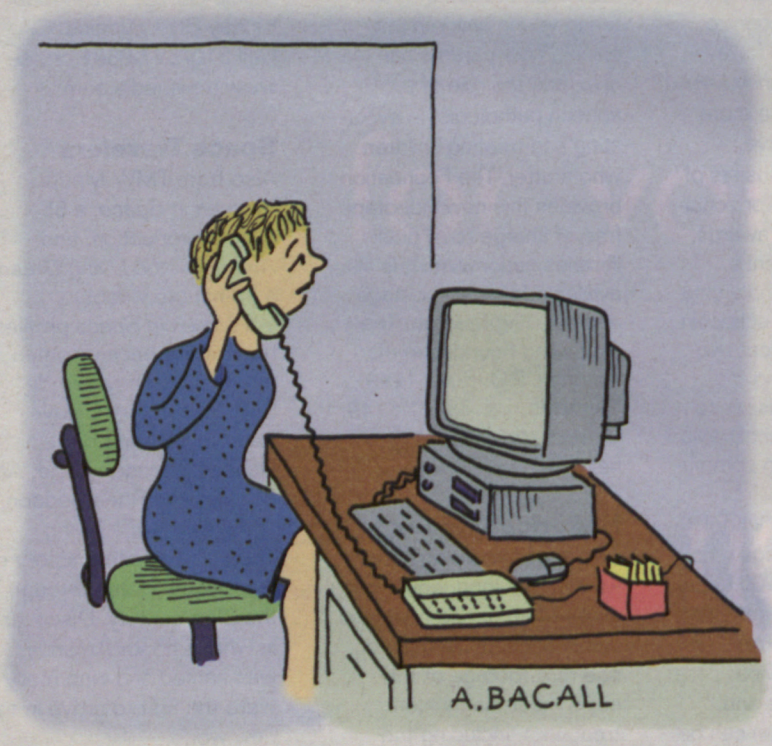
When you have a caseload of 2,000 students, it's nice to know you affect them all, even without direct contact.

*Anita Fullbright, RN, MSN, FNP*
Eureka, California

As a speech/language pathologist, I work on narrative skills by talking about weekend activities.

One Monday morning, a student happily shared an account of his weekend. He said that he had company on Saturday night and pizza was delivered to his house "right at the croak of midnight." Another student quickly corrected him by stating, "It's not the croak of midnight. It's the crock of dawn!"

*Jo Anne Brown*
Hamilton, Massachusetts




***"Welcome to the teacher's computer technical support line. Please call back later. We're here to serve you 24 hours, but not in a row."***

### Rise and Fall

My kindergarten class had as a guest reader a state policeman and his dog that was trained in the Czech Republic. I used this as an opportunity to teach some basic map skills.

I started by locating the United States, the Czech Republic, and the Atlantic Ocean. The kindergartners appeared attentive and interested. One child then raised his hand and asked, "Now can you show us where the tooth fairy lives?'

*Susanna Walz*
Easthampton, Massachusetts

When I was a new teacher I taught a unit on the Civil War. I told my class about the Union Army, how the Southern states had seceded from the Union, how Lincoln fought the war to preserve the Union, Union this and Union that.

I was feeling pretty smug because I thought I'd done a good job of explaining this tragic chapter of our history. Then Kelley raised her hand and asked me if that union was the same union that carpenters belonged to.

*Warren Valente*
Plymouth, Massachusetts

I retired from teaching high school many years ago. Imagine my surprise and delight when a young worker at the post office desk called me by name. But I was destined for a fall.

Me—"How did you know my name?" He—"You was my English teacher."

*Elizabeth Trowbridge*
Bangor, Maine

### Got Laughs?

**● Have a funny school story, anecdote, or vignette you'd like to share with other NEA members? You can send contributions to "In the Light Lane," NEA Today 1201 16th St., NW Washington, DC 20036 Fax: 202/822-7206 Send E-mail to neatoday@nea.org.**

**● Want a classroom chuckle delivered to your E-mail box once a week? Subscribe to the new "In the Light Lane" mailing list. Just send an E-mail to join-lightlane@list.nea.org (no subject or message needed).**

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The NEA Health Information Network supports the use of EPA's *Tools for Schools Action Kit* to prevent and manage indoor air quality problems. The kit includes guidance, a problem solving wheel, and video. Available for $25.
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## Technology

**Works4Me** nea's e-mail classroom tip of the week!

A weekly practical classroom tip from NEA. Visit the helpfrom.nea.org Web site to sign up to receive this free weekly tip via E-mail.

**The Education Technology Promotion Guide** from the Software Publishers Association offers guidelines for publishing the success of your educational technology program. A CD-ROM includes letter and press release templates in both MAC and PC formats. To obtain a copy for your local Association, E-mail your name, address and the name of your local to Shelstar@aol.com.

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**Contact:**
NEA Today Marketplace
1201 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
202/822-7260.

**THE LOWEST WE'VE EVER OFFERED!**

# *A great low rate.*

# 1.7% APR†

*A* great Introductory Annual Percentage Rate (APR) to help pay off your high-interest accounts.

The NEA *Platinum Plus*℠ MasterCard®, one of the best credit card values in the country, is now even better. That's because the **Introductory Annual Percentage Rate (APR) is just 1.7%** on balance transfers and cash advance checks.

As an NEA member, there's **no annual fee** and you'll have access to the highest credit line available anywhere.

Plus, you'll enjoy such exclusive benefits as:

- Automatic MasterPurchase® Protection covers purchases against theft and damage, and extends eligible warranties
- Year-end summary of charges
- $1 million worth of Common Carrier Travel Accident Insurance‡

**And remember: you can always carry more than one MasterCard® credit card.**

So don't delay. Call or complete the application below today to take advantage of all the savings and benefits of the NEA *Platinum Plus* Credit Card. Because at this rate, you'll want to consolidate your high-interest balances right away!

Call: **1-888-758-7946**, priority code A47S.

nea Member Benefits
www.neamb.com

PLATINUM PLUS
*the new standard*

## *About you*

| | |
|---|---|
| Name | |
| Address | |
| City | State Zip |
| Home Phone ( ) | Business Phone ( ) |
| Social Security Number | Date of Birth |
| Mother's Maiden Name (For identification only) | |

## *About your finances*

| | |
|---|---|
| Employer | Position |
| Years There | Annual Salary $ |
| Other Income§ $ | Source |

§Alimony, child support, or separate maintenance income need not be revealed if you do not wish it considered as a basis for repayment.

| | |
|---|---|
| Residence: ❑ Own ❑ Buying ❑ Rent ❑ Other | |
| Monthly Payment $ | |

**Mail your signed application to: NEA Credit Card Program; c/o MBNA America Bank, N.A.; P.O. Box 981054; El Paso, TX 79998-9937**

## *Signature*

X *Signature Date

*I have read this application and everything I have stated in it is true. My signature means that I agree to the conditions described below and will be bound by each of the terms of the Credit Card Agreement, including arbitration. MBNA America Bank, N.A. (MBNA) is authorized to check my credit, employment history or any other information and to report to others such information and credit experience with me. If I do not qualify for the NEA *Platinum Plus* account, I will automatically be considered for the NEA School Days account. I understand that the acceptance or use of any card issued will be subject to the terms of this application and the Credit Card Agreement that will be sent with the card, and agree to be responsible for all charges incurred according to such terms. I am at least 18 years of age and a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident of the U.S. or Puerto Rico. By signing this application, I certify that I am an NEA member or part of an NEA member's family. I consent to and authorize MBNA America Bank, N.A. and MBNA's affiliates to monitor and/or record my telephone conversations with their representatives or the representatives of any of those companies. I accept that MBNA may, at its discretion, periodically consider any account for an automatic upgrade. **Information about me or my account may be shared among MBNA Corp. and its subsidiaries for marketing or administrative purposes. I may prohibit such sharing of information, other than information pertaining solely to transactions or experiences between me and MBNA (or its subsidiaries), by writing to MBNA at P.O. Box 15342, Wilmington, DE 19850 and including my name, address, home phone number and the applicable MBNA account number(s).**

**The NEA is not involved in the credit decision process; standard credit procedure is followed. All applications will be subject to a confidential standard review by MBNA America.**

**Absolutely NO membership dues are used to market this program.**

**MBNA America Bank, N.A. is the exclusive issuer and administrator of the *Platinum Plus* credit card program.**

The NEA Credit Card Program℠ has been developed for NEA members and their families only. If a member decides not to renew membership, that person and his/her family will no longer be eligible to receive the preferred rates, fees and special promotions offered through the NEA Credit Card Program. If eligible, a replacement card will be offered. Any account opened in response to this offer will be governed by the laws of Delaware.

The information about the costs of the card described in this application was accurate as of 1/01. The information may have changed after that date. To find out what may have changed, please call (888) 758-7946. TTY users please call (800) 833-6262.

MBNA®, MBNA America® and *Platinum Plus* are service marks of MBNA America Bank, N.A. MasterCard® and MasterPurchase® are federally registered service marks of MasterCard International Inc., and are used pursuant to license.

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## *Request for additional card*

| Name of Authorized User | Relationship |
|---|---|
| | |

| | |
|---|---|
| †Annual Percentage Rate (APR) | NEA *Platiunum Plus* account: 15.99% for purchases; NEA School Days account: 16.99% for purchases. |
| Annual Fee | None. |
| Grace Period for Repayment of Balances for Purchases | At least 25 days from statement closing date. |
| Method of Computing the Balance for Purchases | Average daily balance (including new transactions). |
| Transaction Fee for Purchases | Transaction fee for the purchase of wire transfers, money orders, bets, lottery tickets, and casino gaming chips: 2% of each such purchase; $2 minimum, $10 maximum. |
| Transaction Fee for Cash Advances and Fees for Paying Late or Exceeding the Credit Limit | Transaction fee for Bank and ATM cash advances: 2% of each cash advance; $2 minimum, $10 maximum. Transaction fee for credit card cash advance checks and balance transfers: 1% of each cash advance; $2 minimum, $10 maximum. Late Payment Fee: $25. Over-the-Credit-Limit Fee: $25. |

†The current promotional APR offer for cash advance checks and balance transfers made with either account is 1.7% through your first four statement closing dates, commencing the month after your account is open. Thereafter, the APR that will be applied to all new and outstanding cash advance check and balance transfer transactions will be 15.99% for the NEA *Platinum Plus* account or 16.99% for the NEA School Days account. Cash advances and balance transfers may not be used to pay down or pay off any MBNA® account. **MBNA will allocate your payments to balances (including new transactions) with lower APRs before balances with higher APRs. Cash advances obtained through a Bank or ATM transaction are not eligible for the promotional 1.7% APR offer. The non-promotional APR for your account is not guaranteed and is subject to change.**

‡Certain restrictions apply to this benefit and others, as described in the benefits brochures which are sent soon after your account is opened. NEA School Days Card customer benefits differ from those available with the NEA *Platinum Plus* account, e.g., year-end summary of charges is available upon request; MasterPurchase Protection is not available and maximum Common Carrier Travel Accident Insurance coverage is up to $500,000; Credit lines run from $500 to $5,000, while *Platinum Plus* credit lines are from $5,500 to $100,000.

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